

European and International Board

Agenda

Tuesday 10 December 2013
11.30am

Lake Room
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

To: Members of the European and International Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



European & International Board

10 December 2013

The European & International Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday 10 December 2013** at **11.30am, Lake Room, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP**.

Timings

11.30am – 12.15pm	LGA Formal Board meeting.
12.15pm – 12.45pm	Working lunch with EU Structural and Investment Fund seminar.
12.45pm – 2.30pm	Visit to Malvern Hills Science Park.

Apologies

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

Political Group meetings

Please refer to your Political Group office (see contact details below) for group meeting timings and venues.

Labour:	Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263	email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative:	Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264	email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.group@local.gov.uk

Attendance Sheet

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Location

A map showing the location of County Hall is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact

Frances Marshall (Tel: 020 7664 3220, email: frances.marshall@local.gov.uk)

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme, a Carers' Allowance of up to £6.31 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependents (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Social Media

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgaei.

European & International Board - Membership 2013-2014

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Gr. Uff. Marco Cereste OSSI OMRI [Vice Chair]	Peterborough City
Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
Nick Daubney	Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC
Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
Alan Melton	Fenland DC
Liz Eyre	Worcestershire CC
Substitutes:	
David Hall	Somerset CC
Joanne Beavis	Braintree DC
Judith Wallace	North Tyneside MBC
Chris Pillai	Calderdale MBC
Labour (7)	
Sue Murphy [Deputy Chair]	Manchester City
Chris Shaw	North East Lincolnshire Council
Sir Albert Bore	Birmingham City
Aaron Shotton	Flintshire CC
Sherma Batson MBE DL	Stevenage BC
Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City
John Kent	Thurrock Council
Substitute:	
Dave Allan	Sunderland City
Robert Evans	Surrey CC
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Richard Kemp CBE [Deputy Chair]	Liverpool City
Sian Reid	Cambridge City
Substitute:	
Paul Crossley	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Independent (2)	
Clarence Barrett [Chair]	Havering LB
Diane James	Waverly BC
Substitute:	
Adrian Naylor	Bradford MDC
Peter Jones	Babergh DC
Robert Dutton OBE	Wrexham BC

LGA European & International Board

Attendance 2013-2014

Councillors	15/10/13				
Conservative Group					
Gr. Uff. Marco Cereste OSSI OMRI	Yes				
Gordon Keymer CBE	Yes				
Neil Clarke	No				
Nick Daubney	Yes				
Keith Glazier	No				
Alan Melton	Yes				
Liz Eyre	No				
Labour Group					
Sue Murphy	Yes				
Chris Shaw	Yes				
Sir Albert Bore	Yes				
Aaron Shotton	Yes				
Sherma Batson MBE DL	No				
Roger Lawrence	Yes				
John Kent	Yes				
Lib Dem Group					
Richard Kemp CBE	Yes				
Sian Reid	Yes				
Independent					
Clarence Barrett	Yes				
Diane James	Yes				
Substitutes					
Joanne Beavis	Yes				
Judith Wallace	Yes				
Chris Pillai	Yes				
Dave Allan	Yes				

European and International Board

10 December 2013

11.30am – 2.30pm

Lake Room, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP

Part 1: FORMAL BOARD BUSINESS, 11.30AM – 12.15PM

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1.	LGA Lobbying Priorities for 2014	3
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4.	Date and Time of Next meeting: Wednesday 26 February 2014, Local Government House, London	

Part 2: THEMED SEMINAR WITH WORKING LUNCH, 12.15PM – 12.45PM

5. **European Structural and Investment Funds: The local perspective**
Worcestershire County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) representatives will provide a presentation on the development of the LEP's investment strategy, the projects they are seeking to fund, what has worked well, what the challenges are and how the LGA could help.

Part 3: SITE VISIT, 12.45PM – 2.30PM

6. **Visit to Malvern Hills Science Park (via bus)**
The Science Park is the home of many innovative businesses and is entering into Phase 4 of its development. The Science Park is a focal point for Worcestershire ERDF funded projects around growing the cyber sector and proof of concept fund, and will be the home of the cyber training centre.
Following the site visit, Members will be dropped off at Forgate Street Rail Station.

LGA EU lobbying priorities for 2014

Purpose of report

For discussion and endorsement.

Summary

European Union (EU) legislation has a significant regulatory and financial impact on councils. Every year the EU publishes an annual work programme, the Brussels equivalent to the Queen's Speech. This was published in late October 2013 and a significant number of legislative proposals will affect councils.

The work programme has been analysed and suggested EU lobbying priorities are outlined in this paper. Members are asked to consider the proposed LGA EU lobbying priorities for 2014 for recommendation to Executive on 12 December 2014.

Recommendations

That the Board considers the proposed LGA EU lobbying priorities for 2014 (**Appendix A**) for recommendation to Executive and notes the wide range of other pieces of EU legislation which will affect councils (**Appendix B**).

Action

Officers to note and action any comments.

Contact officers: Ian Hughes
Position: Head of Programme – Growth & International
Phone no: 020 7664 3101
E-mail: ian.hughes@local.gov.uk

LGA EU lobbying priorities for 2014

Background

1. The European Commission published its 2014 work programme in late October 2013. It is the European Unions' (EU) equivalent of the Queen's Speech and sets out a programme of EU proposals which will be considered by the EU institutions in 2014.
2. The EU's legislative proposals affect many aspects of councils' activities. It is estimated that at least 50 per cent of regulation affecting councils now has its origins in EU legislation.
3. The 2014 work programme contains 30 new legislative proposals. The full programme can be viewed via the below footnote.¹ There are fewer proposals than usual, as the European Parliament and Commissioners are in the last year of their five-year mandate. European Parliament elections will be held on 22 May 2014. The new European Commissioners will be confirmed in Autumn 2014.
4. The work programme has been analysed to identify those issues which are expected to have a regulatory or financial impact on councils and the services that they provide. This report lists all those proposals and suggests the LGA focus on six themes in 2014. It is proposed that there is a priority list and a "watch list" of other issues:
 - 4.1. **'Priority' issues** which require pro-active lobbying work and engagement in both Brussels and Whitehall.
 - 4.2. **'Other' EU dossiers** will be on a watching brief. These can be escalated to 'priority issues' if the legislative process raises new risks or opportunities.
5. Ensuring that EU legislation is proportionate and is transposed correctly into UK law is important given the 2011 Localism Act EU Financial Sanctions provision. This enables a Minister to seek to pass on to a local authority a fine from the EU for failing to comply with an EU obligation, if the Government can prove that the local authority contributed to UK non-compliance.

LGA EU lobbying priorities for 2014

6. Members are asked to consider the following suggested **priorities**, which are expected to have most impact, for the LGA to work on in 2014:
 - 7.1 **EU funds.** LGA lobbying in Whitehall and Brussels has secured the localisation of € 5.3 billion EU structural and Investment funds through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to deliver local growth and local economic regeneration. As the final EU and national documents are put in place, it is essential that they enable local areas to drive the funds.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2014_annex_en.pdf

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The LGA is working to achieve that through our representation on the EU Funds Programme Growth Board. Final plans will need to be signed off by the European Commission before the funds can flow in local areas.

7.2 EU environmental legislation. The EU is proposing to publish a 'framework for climate and energy policies' and an initiative on 'resource efficiency and waste'. The LGA's aim is to ensure any new subsequent regulation in the fields of energy, waste, and air quality is manageable for councils and that EU targets are realistic in the current financial climate.

7.3 EU procurement rules. A new EU Procurement Directive will come into force in 2016. LGA lobbying to date has achieved a more streamlined and flexible set of EU procurement rules and ensured that shared services are exempt from EU rules. Continued work is required to ensure that councils benefit fully from the new rules which should make councils' purchasing rules more simple, provided that they is no UK "gold-plating".

7.4 EU transport proposals. EU proposals are expected to be published in December 2013 on urban mobility. We should aim to ensure that these do not add new burdens to local transport planning, including road pricing and congestion charging, where there are proposals for EU standardisation. The EU's role on regulating urban transport should focus on sharing best practice, rather than introducing binding measures on Government or councils.

7.5 EU legislation affecting councils' regulatory services. Court rulings in relation to the EU Services Directive may also lead to changes in the licencing fees councils can charge. The proposal for EU birth and death certificates will need to be followed to ensure they are manageable for councils and add no new financial burdens.

7.6 EU data protection regulation. The proposals will impose new processes and procedures for councils as regards use, storage, and deletion of personal data. The proposed regulation, designed for big business, does not contain proper exclusions for public sector use of personal data. Appropriate changes are needed for 'public policy' use and storage of personal data.

7.7 European Aid Policy. The European Commission has recognised local government as a critical partner in delivering its future aid commitments through a recent policy communication. Alongside partners from across Europe and the Commonwealth, the LGA has actively lobbied for this recognition. Further lobbying is required to ensure that funding is mobilised for local government to respond collectively to this new policy.

7. It is suggested that the above issues will require pro-active lobbying work and engagement in both Brussels and Whitehall. Listed in **Appendix A** are the proposals intended for the "watch-list" which will be regularly reported to members for consideration.

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Delivery of our lobbying priorities

8. The LGA will advocate 'light touch' legislation, meaning that the EU sets out the results to be achieved and national and local government is given the right to determine how best to deliver the desired outcome. We will challenge any new administrative and financial burdens.
9. This report does not detail all the areas of influence that the LGA lead members and councils can use to develop our lobbying proposals. An appropriate delivery plan will be developed for each priority and we will expect to work with lead members, Boards and ensure that our influence through the Committee of Regions, CEMR (European LGA) and CEEP (the employers forum in the EU) is used effectively.
10. Given that both regional LGAs and city regions have representation in Brussels, it is the intention to share agreed priorities with these bodies and consider how we share resources to maximise English lobbying.
11. Much of our work will be Whitehall focused as we will need to influence the UK view in Brussels. A meeting was convened by the LGA to discuss our priorities with the EU leads in government departments. This was deemed a priority work area due to the devolution of EU fines to the local level under the Localism Act. Unfortunately, the meeting had to be postponed because of the lack of attendance by Whitehall leads. This is being raised at the higher level in Whitehall.

Lead Member Portfolios

12. At the October meeting of the Board, Members considered how to structure the leadership of the Board's lobbying priorities to make the most effective use of resources and to ensure our priorities have political traction.
13. The Board agreed that each of the four Lead Members be assigned a portfolio area, which they would be responsible for championing, for example by aligning the work of LGA Boards and EU/international bodies to secure the most effective voice for councils. Lead Members could develop work plans in specific priority areas to involve other members in lobbying and to foster stronger links to EU bodies such as the Committee of the regions and other LGA Boards.
14. Lead Members met on 25 November and agreed that LGA's European lobbying priorities be grouped broadly around the below four areas and be championed by each the following members:
 - 14.1. **Public Service Reform** (including: EU procurement, state aid and employment law) - Cllr Clarence Barrett (Chair).
 - 14.2. **EU funding** - Cllr Sue Murphy (Vice-Chair).
 - 14.3. **Environment, energy and waste** – Marco Cereste (Deputy-Chair).
 - 14.4. **Trade and aid**. Cllr Richard Kemp (Deputy-Chair).

Appendix A. LGA priority items for 2014

<p>EU Funds 2014-20 (ESF, ERDF) <i>Finalising the design & delivery of EU funds from 2014-20</i></p>
<p>2030 framework for climate & energy policies <i>This will lead to new climate & energy legislation and targets affecting councils, especially greenhouse gas emissions</i></p> <p>Resource efficiency & waste initiative <i>A new legislative initiative which will include revised waste targets and stronger enforcement</i></p>
<p>Implementing new EU procurement directive <i>The new Directive goes live in 2015. We need to ensure that a suite of UK government consultations leads to no UK gold plating.</i></p> <p>E-invoicing directive <i>Legislation proposed in June 2013 will require changes to all councils' payment systems to ensure they can accept EU standard e-invoices in 3 or 4 years' time.</i></p>
<p>EU urban transport package <i>Possible impact on local transport planning, congestion charging, and road pricing (and possibly air quality).</i></p>
<p>EU services directive implementation <i>New regulation (resulting from High Court rulings) will lead to changes in licensing fees charged by councils</i></p> <p>EU format civil documents <i>Legislation for new EU standard birth/death/marriage certificates</i></p>
<p>EU data protection regulation <i>New processes & procedures for councils on use, storage, deletion and permissions relating to use of personal data. The proposed Regulation, designed for big business, does not contain proper exclusions for public sector use of personal data.</i></p>
<p>European Aid Policy <i>The EU Commission's communication "Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" clearly recognises local government as a critical partner in delivering its future aid commitments. The EU Commission has invited local government to come up with a proposal for a collective delivery mechanism.</i></p>

Appendix B. Other proposed EU legislation affecting councils – the “watch list”

<p>Communication on the definitive VAT system <i>EU consultation on VAT on Public Bodies by Feb 2014</i> <i>Need to ensure future legislation doesn't threaten UK VAT reimbursements to councils</i></p>
<p>State aid modernisation in key sectors: <i>EU competition rules should make it easier for councils to make local decisions about how enterprises can be supported with grant funds in line with UK 'assisted areas' map.</i></p>
<p>EU state aid rules to airports & airlines <i>New rules may severely limit public sector ability to support regional airports, outlawing all public operating support to regional airports within 10 years</i></p>
<p>Environmental assessment framework for fracking <i>Proposal to set minimum standards to contain the potential environmental and public health impact of fracking operations</i></p>
<p>Revision of food hygiene legislation <i>New standards on composite products and meat inspection</i></p>
<p>European Accessibility Act <i>Legislative initiative will include binding requirements on the procurement of 'accessible' goods and services, benefiting those with disabilities</i></p>
<p>Tobacco products directive (presentation & sale of) <i>This will affect councils' trading standards/public health activities</i></p>
<p>Directive on free movement of workers & their rights <i>Consideration of the rights of workers from abroad to claim UK benefits & vice-versa</i></p>
<p>Labour mobility package - revision of Regulation on social security schemes* <i>Consideration of accessible to EU workers to social security schemes</i></p>
<p>Directive on information and consultation of workers* <i>The reworking & merging of the 3 current directives may have implications for councils' HR practices</i></p>
<p>EU working time directive <i>EU is currently considering next steps on reforming the Directive: potential major impacts on councils' care homes & fire services functions. However no major development expected in 2014</i></p>
<p>Non-legislative initiative on tackling gender pay gap</p>

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

Summary

At an earlier meeting, European and International Board (E&I) Members requested a regular update on recent developments on each of our key priority topics. In addition, the Board routinely receives an update of recent developments in the European and international bodies to which it nominates members and on the LGA's international activities.

Recommendation

Members are asked to comment on the report and make any recommendations for officers to action.

Action

Officers to take action as directed by Members.

Contact officers: Ian Hughes
Position: Head of Programme
Phone no: 020 7664 3101
E-mail: ian.hughes@local.gov.uk

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

A: BOARD EU LOBBYING PRIORITIES

EU funds 2014-20

1. After two years of negotiations, the EU has agreed both its overall budget for 2014-20, and the rules governing the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds for 2014-20. Following the successful LGA lobbying campaign led by E&I Board members, the vast majority of councils' demands have been included in the new regime: new instruments for local delivery, stronger central-local partnership working, and simplified common processes covering each of the funds. The focus is now on ensuring that Government makes the most of the new opportunities afforded by the EU regime. More details on the agreement can be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

Shadow Programme Growth Board

2. The shadow Programme Growth Board (PGB) for the 2014-2020 ESI Funds has been established by Whitehall to put in place delivery arrangements for the new programme. It met for the second time on 6 November. The meeting was very positive and calls from local government and LEPs that central Government should work with local partners to ensure the new ESIF arrangements are co-designed with local partners, joined up and simplified to enable projects to flow freely were well received.
3. These issues are highlighted in the Local Government Association paper, which can be viewed here: http://www.local.gov.uk/european-and-international/-/journal_content/56/10180/5661584/ARTICLE.

Rewiring public services

4. The LGA worked with Members of the European Parliament ahead of a key vote on 21 October to ensure strict new EU data protection rules do not place undue burdens on councils' public service delivery. The rules as proposed by the European Commission are designed for big businesses and do not currently contain the proper derogations to allow councils to easily deal with personal data for public interest purposes.
5. In October, the LGA joined up with similar associations across Europe to respond to EU proposals which will require councils to accept e-invoices rather than paper-based ones from their suppliers. The EU's proposals will require councils to adapt their payment systems and associated software to conform with a new EU standard invoice which is currently under development. The LGA is seeking to ensure a limited number of common technical standards are agreed, and that there will be a sufficient time period allowed for councils to adapt their payments processing software.
6. The LGA's *Rewiring Public Services* campaign and approach to ensuring fiscal devolution to councils has been presented by both members and officers at a range of different meetings in Brussels.

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Public Procurement

7. The new EU procurement rules are scheduled to be agreed at EU level in January 2014. The new rules are likely to come into force in the UK at a date to be determined by Government in late 2014 or 2015, rather than by 2016 as required by the Directive. The Cabinet Office is favouring an early implementation as the new rules streamline the procurement process.
8. Gains from the LGA lobbying campaign led by E&I Board members include: shorter procurement timescales; new abilities to pool services with neighbouring authorities; and a greater ability to negotiate with suppliers to ensure best value in public contracts.
9. The LGA's focus is now on working closely with councils to respond to a series of 15 Cabinet Office consultations about implementing the Directive. There are several important areas, such as social services contracts, the approach to SMEs, and new forms to publicise contracts, which have been left to Member States to decide how to implement. We will want to ensure no national 'gold plating' of the Directive. The work on implementation is now being led by the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, as part of the LGA's 'productivity' offer to councils.

B: INSTITUTIONS

EU Committee of the Regions

November Plenary

10. The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is an advisory body of the EU, comprising 350 local and regional politicians from across the EU. It defends the interests of local councils in formal EU decision-making.
11. During the CoR November plenary session, the chair of the EP Committee on Regional Development, Danuta Hübner, took stock of the new rules governing the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. Although adoption of the new rules will now enable governments to start allocating funds, controversial points still remain, such as the EU's new ability to suspend payments to projects in Member States whose governments have a high national debt: known as 'macro-economic conditionality'. The limited resources available for the European Social Fund is also a concern.
12. The plenary also considered the main challenges in 2014. Commission Vice-President Šefčovič presented the Commission's work programme. The CoR then agreed its political priorities for the coming year giving particular emphasis on youth unemployment, the review of the EU growth Strategy and the 2014 European elections.
13. The plenary adopted the report by LGA member Cllr Roger Stone which considered critically the implementation by Member States of their national strategies for Roma integration. Also adopted were reports from Welsh Assembly members Mick Antoniw AM on Public Employment Services, and Rodri Glyn Thomas AM on state aids to fisheries.

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Member Nominations

14. There are currently eight member nominations, from all four political groups, which were nominated by LGA earlier in the year (some dating back to February 2013) but are still with Brussels or Whitehall awaiting ratification. These vacancies significantly affect UK voting strength. The Leader of the UK Delegation has written to the new UK Ambassador to the EU to demand that these be expedited where they have already been referred from the Prime Minister to Brussels.

Composition

15. This Board has previously received reports on the need for the national composition of CoR to be recalibrated following accession of Croatia to the EU. A proposal is expected from the European Commission early 2014, which will be used by the UK and other large countries to seek a rebalancing towards the template used by the European Parliament, which better reflects the population balance of the EU and therefore mitigates a democratic deficit.

Council of European Municipalities & Regions (CEMR)

Policy Committee 2-3 December 2013

16. The Council of European Municipalities & Regions (CEMR) is the European LGA, with member from over 40 national LGAs from across Europe, collectively representing over 100,000 local councils. It is formally consulted by the European Commission on issues likely to affect local government at an early stage in the preparation of new laws, making it an influential advocate.
17. The Policy Committee is the CEMR steering body, meeting every six months to set political priorities, manage budget etc. This meeting was the first of the new 3-year mandate and included elections to political positions. LGA member Cllr Gordon Keymer was appointed as CEMR Vice-President (UK) and elected as Chair of the Finance Committee. UK membership is as follows:
- 17.1. Cllr Gordon Keymer (LGA, CON), Tandridge Council
SUB: Cllr David Shakespeare (LGA, CON), Buckinghamshire Council
 - 17.2. Cllr Keith Wakefield (LGA, LAB), Leeds Council
SUB: TBC (LGA, LAB)
 - 17.3. Cllr Sian Reid (LGA, LD), F, Cambridge City Council
SUB: TBC (LGA, LAB)
 - 17.4. Cllr Linda Gillham (LGA, IND), Runnymede Council
SUB: Cllr Joanne Beavis (LGA, CON), Braintree Council
 - 17.5. Cllr Mairi Evans (CoSLA, SNP), Angus Council
SUB: Cllr Gary Robinson (CoSLA, Ind), Shetland Council
 - 17.6. Cllr Bob Bright (WLGA, LAB), Newport Council

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SUB: Cllr Ronnie Hughes (WLGA, LAB), Conwy Council

17.7. Cllr John Matthews (NILGA, ALL), Larne Borough Council
SUB: Cllr Frances Renton (CoSLA, LD), Scottish Borders Council

18. The meeting also adopted CEMR's policy priorities for 2014, which largely replicate the draft LGA priorities and adopted position papers on state aid to regional airports; occupational health and safety, and urban-rural areas.

Congress of the Council of Europe

Congress Peer review of UK Local Democracy

19. Congress is the local government arm of the Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg. The Council of Europe seeks to promote peace and reconciliation, to defend human rights and rule of law, and to develop democracy and good governance. The Congress acts as the guardian of local democracy and good governance, which it achieves by scrutinising how each country implements the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and it organises election observation missions to ensure fair and transparent electoral processes.

20. As reported previously, the Congress is conducting a "peer review" of how the UK is respecting its commitments under the European Charter of Local Self-Government (the Charter, signed in 1998, sets benchmarks for central-local relations, financial autonomy, and good governance).

21. The Congress has now completed two fact-finding visits and is preparing its draft report, which will go to the Monitoring Committee on 19 February and final adoption in mid-March 2014. The draft report will be circulated to members of this Board in early January.

October Plenary Session

22. The Congress meets twice a year to adopt committee reports and to debate current issues relevant to local government, democracy and human rights. At the October plenary session, several debates focused on local and regional responses to the economic crisis and challenges in the sphere of social cohesion. There were debates on, in particular, "Integration through self-employment: promoting local entrepreneurship of migrants", "Migrants' access to regional labour markets" and "Regionalisation and devolution in Europe in a context of economic crisis".

23. The session was also the occasion of a special ceremony for the European Charter of Local Self-Government, now that it covers all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. There were several monitoring reports ("peer reviews") concerning Ireland, Hungary, Ukraine, Albania and Denmark, as well as reports on local elections in Armenia and Macedonia.

C: INTERNATIONAL

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

24. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) is a voluntary membership organisation of ministries and associations of local government in 40 Commonwealth nations. Since its creation in 1995, British local government has been an active member of CLGF.
25. Cllr Barrett represented the LGA at a meeting of CLGF's European Members on 24 October. The theme of the meeting was 'local government innovation at a time of austerity'. With local government representatives from Cyprus, Malta and the UK, it gave delegates an opportunity to share experiences and international learning.
26. On Thursday 7 November, Cllr Barrett met with the Executive Committee of the CLGF, which included Deputy Chair of the Board, Cllr Richard Kemp, and CLGF Board Member, Cllr Dave Wilcox. It provided an opportunity to discuss issues affecting local government across the wider Commonwealth and the post-2015 development agenda.
27. On the 8 November the LGA Chairman, Sir Merrick Cockell hosted a meeting of the CLGF Executive Committee in London. Promoting local economic development is a growing priority in the LGA's discussions with Commonwealth counterparts. The aim of the discussion was to think more creatively about how CLGF and its members can be more proactive in promoting local/national approaches to international trade across the Commonwealth. The LGA is seeking to build on recent work with UKTI on pushing the case for a greater role for local government in contributing to national growth policies by promoting inward investment and accessing export markets.

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 Suite, 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
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Welcome and Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting with a round of introductions and noted the apologies that had been received.

1. **European and International Board Membership, Lead Member Priorities and Work Programme for 2013/14**

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.

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.

Decision

That Members **agreed** the Board's priorities and work programme for the 2013/14 meeting cycle and the Lead Member portfolio approach.

Action

Take forward in line with Members' direction.

Ian Hughes

2. **Future EU Funding, 2014 – 2020**

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.

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

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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.

Directions to County Hall



By Public Transport

- There are two rail stations in Worcester:
 - **Forgate Street.** This is in the Town Centre, with the CrownGate Bus Station a three minute walking distance.
 - **Shrub Hill.** This is on the outskirts of the Town Centre, with the CrownGate Bus Station a 15 minute walking distance.
- Bus service 44 (operated by Midland Red West) runs between CrownGate Bus Station and County Hall. Alternatively, there is a taxi rank outside the train station.
- Passengers arriving at Shrub Hill railway station have no direct service to County Hall and are advised to travel to the CrownGate bus station and use the service 44. Alternatively, there is a taxi rank outside the train station.

By vehicle from the M5 to County Hall

- If travelling northwards on the M5 leave at junction 7 and take the first turning left from the large roundabout, signposted Worcester.
- If travelling southwards on the M5 leave at junction 7 and take the third turning left from the large roundabout, signposted Worcester.
- Travelling along the dual carriageway from the motorway roundabout go straight on at the next roundabout and again straight on at the second roundabout.
- As you climb slight gradient move out to outside lane in preparation for a right turn at the next roundabout (the inside lane is not affected by roundabout). At the roundabout turn right into Spetchley Road.
- Travel along Spetchley Road for approximately 1/3 of a mile. At the mini roundabout turn left into the County Hall Campus.

By vehicle from Worcester City Centre to County Hall

- Take the London Road away from the centre signposted M5 motorway and Evesham.
- Travelling eastwards along London Road, passing through a set of traffic lights at the bottom of the first large hill, climb to the top of the next hill. Approach the large roundabout and take the first left (almost straight ahead if you remain in the inside lane) into Spetchley Road.
- Travel along Spetchley Road for approximately 1/3 of a mile. At the mini roundabout turn left into the County Hall Campus.

Location Map

Address: County Hall, Spetchley Road,
Worcester, WR5 2NP

Telephone: 01905 763763

- A:** Forgate Street Rail Station
- B:** Shrub Hill Rail Station
- C:** Crowngate Bus Station
- D:** County Hall

