

Minutes

Annual Meeting of the General Assembly

Item 6

30 June 2009

Harrogate International Centre

Present

320 authorities in full membership and 24 authorities in corporate membership were represented at the meeting.

1. Appointment of President and Vice-Presidents

The Chief Executive welcomed representatives to the meeting and invited nominations for the position of President of the Association.

It was moved by Cllr Margaret Eaton OBE (Bradford MBC), seconded by Cllr Sir Jeremy Beecham and **agreed** that Lord Best be elected President of the Association until the next Annual Meeting.

After a short address, Lord Best then invited the Assembly to consider the appointment of Vice-Presidents for the coming year. The Assembly **agreed** to the appointment of the following persons as Vice-Presidents of the LGA for 2009/10:

MP Vice-Presidents

Conservatives

Christopher Chope OBE MP
The Rt Hon David Curry MP
Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Eric Pickles MP
Caroline Spelman MP
Alistair Burt MP

Labour

Clive Betts MP
Mary Creagh MP
Tom Levitt MP
Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Barry Sheerman MP
Rt Hon Alun Michael MP

Liberal Democrat

Julia Goldsworthy MP
Paul Rowen MP
Andrew Stunell OBE MP

Peer

Conservative

Baroness Hanham CBE
Lord Hanningfield DL
The Rt Hon The Lord Jenkin of Roding

Labour

Lord Harris of Haringey
Baroness Henig
Lord Peter Smith of Wigan
Lord Whitty

Liberal Democrat

Baroness Barker
Lord Dholakia
Baroness Maddock
Lord Roger Roberts
Baroness Ros Scott

Cross Benchers

Lord Laming
Baroness Howarth of Breckland
Baroness Sally Greengross

MEPs

Labour

Glenis Willmott MEP
Richard Howitt MEP

Conservative

Edward McMillan-Scott MEP

Liberal Democrat

Fiona Hall MEP
Andrew Duff MEP

Welsh Assembly Member (Liberal Democrat)

Jenny Randerson AM

2. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen

Chairman

The President invited nominations for the position of Chairman of the Association for 2009/2010. It was moved, seconded and **agreed** that Councillor Margaret Eaton OBE (City of Bradford MBC) be elected Chairman of the LGA until the next Annual Meeting.

Vice-Chairmen

The Chairman invited nominations for the two positions of Vice-Chairmen of the Association for 2009/2010. The following nominations were moved and duly seconded:

Cllr Sir Jeremy Beecham (Newcastle upon Tyne City Council)
Cllr David Shakespeare OBE (Buckinghamshire CC)

Cllr Sir Jeremy Beecham and Cllr David Shakespeare OBE were **elected** as Vice-Chairmen of the Association until the next Annual Meeting.

Deputy Chairmen

The following were **elected** as Deputy Chairmen until the next Annual Meeting.

- Cllr Richard Kemp (Liverpool City Council)
- Cllr David Parsons CBE (Leicestershire County Council)
- Cllr Keith Ross OBE (West Somerset DC)
- Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE (Northumberland County Council)

3. Minutes of the General Assembly Meeting held on 1 July 2009

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

4. Audit Accounts (Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2009)

The General Assembly received a report which provided them with the LGA's audited accounts for 2008-09.

Decision

*The General Assembly **received** the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009.*

5. Chairman's Report to the General Assembly

Councillor Margaret Eaton OBE, Chairman, addressed the meeting, highlighting the work of the LGA over the past year and setting out its achievements.

Councillor Eaton also referred to the enormous difficulties that both national and local government had to face over the past year, the terrible Baby Peter case, the collapse of the Icelandic banks and the effect felt in every part of the country of the recession.

Councillor Eaton emphasised the need, at this critical time, to ensure that the LGA is better than ever before as a voice for all of local government – that it is local government, working for local people, that will be the answer to the difficulties that the country is facing at this time.

6-9 Motions from Member Authorities

The Chairman advised the General Assembly that the LGA had received notice of four motions from member authorities this year. The LGA Executive had agreed to debate two at General Assembly and to remit the remaining two to the Environment Board and the LGA Executive for detailed discussion.

The Assembly proceeded to debate the selected motions.

1. Item 6 – First Debate – Concessionary Fares

Cllr Stuart Bradford, Amber Valley Borough Council, proposed a motion on concessionary fares, which was seconded by Cllr Jim Harker (Northamptonshire County Council). Representatives from Preston and Wokingham, both of whom submitted similar motions, spoke briefly.

Motion:

Amber Valley Borough Council proposes that this Association-

- *recognises the severe problems that are being experienced by a large number of member authorities due to the shortfalls in central government funding for the concessionary fares scheme.*
- *that in 2008-2009 approximately 50 councils experienced shortfalls and that this number is likely to increase over the course of this year as the costs of the scheme increase faster than the grant.*
- *notes the Government's admission that the current system is not fit for purpose and that it is undertaking a review to put in place a better system for 2011 onwards.*
- *believes that the proposed course of action is inadequate given the number of member authorities affected, the size of the shortfall and the fact that in a number of cases jobs and services elsewhere may have to be cut to meet the shortfall.*
- *therefore resolves to formally request that the Government takes immediate action to address this problem by ensuring that the scheme is fully funded".*

The Chairman opened the debate to the floor.

Cllr David Sparks, Chairman of the LGA's Regeneration and Transport Board, responded on behalf of the LGA

The General Assembly **agreed** the motion on Concessionary Fares

Item 7 - Second Debate – Policing

Cllr Tim Young, Colchester Borough Council), proposed a motion on Policing, which was seconded by Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson (West Yorkshire Police Authority and Wakefield Council).

Motion:

Colchester Borough Council

Calls upon the LGA to approve and adopt the following motion:-

“That this Association

- *stresses the need for the police service to work closely with Local Councils and other agencies, and commends the successful relationships built up in many Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships;*
- *notes that a significant proportion of council tax is spent on policing;*
- *welcome steps taken to increase the responsiveness of the service and keep the public informed eg. by crime mapping, policing pledge, etc;*
- *recognises that greater transparency and accountability are required at neighbourhood, basic command unit and force level but*
- *rejects proposals for the direct election of police authority members or police commissioners and welcomes the Home Secretary’s decision not to proceed with such proposals.*

The Association calls upon all the major political parties to enter into discussions with it and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) to seek to build a consensus on ways of achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 4 above, without establishing competing mandates with local councils, but by means of, inter alia, greater support for all police authority members, training, peer review, closer scrutiny (involving independent members) to enhance the effectiveness of police authorities within the local democratic framework.”

The Chairman opened the debate to the floor.

Cllr Sir Jeremy Beecham, LGA Vice-Chairman, responded on behalf of the Association.

The General **assembly** agreed the motion on Policing.

Item 8 – Climate Change Motion

Cllr David Smith, Lichfield District Council, proposed a motion on Climate Change.

Motion

Lichfield District Council proposes that

“This Association commends the excellent work undertaken by the LGA's research team and the contribution they are making bringing academics and members together to particularly address the climate change agenda.

Members now have the opportunity to take a proactive lead to identify their future expectations for both products and services together with the services they specify. This amounts to probably the greatest spend in the UK economy and represents the largest combined Carbon footprint of any sector.

As the lead partner we can co-ordinate the contribution made by our Universities, Government and European funding, together with the development of new industries.

Local Government now has the opportunity to make a major difference to the way we tackle the problems of Global Warming.

This will place Local Government at the centre of driving the development of new industries that can be ready to help take us out of this recession and also take a leading role in the reduction of Carbon emissions.

It is therefore moved that this Conference agree to take urgent action and set up a delivery strategy for Local Government to take the lead role in pulling together Research and Development, Funding and Business Development”.

There was no requirement for this Motion to be seconded as it was not the subject of debate at the meeting.

Cllr Richard Kemp, Deputy Chair of the LGA responded on behalf of the LGA.

The General Assembly **agreed** that this motion be remitted to the LGA Environment Board.

Item 9 - Icelandic Banks Motion

Cllr Chris Miller (Daventry District Council) proposed a motion on Icelandic Banks.

Motion

Daventry District Council proposes that this Association

- Notes and applauds the work of LGA officers and leading members, in partnership with affected member authorities, the Welsh LGA, COSLA, and the Association of Police Authorities in trying to secure the return of deposits made

by councils, fire and police authorities in England, Scotland and Wales in the four failed Icelandic banks.

- Welcomes the indications that a significant proportion of the monies deposited will eventually be recovered.
- Notwithstanding the above, has concerns about the impact of any shortfall in terms of monies recovered by councils and therefore calls upon the Government to agree to three key measures that would deliver clear value for money for the taxpayer:
 1. Guarantee that local authorities can spread any losses from deposits over a period of up to 20 years rather than having to take an immediate loss impacting on budget and council tax decisions. This would allow appropriate strategies to be developed to replenish reserves over time.
 2. Compensate authorities that depend heavily on interest income to fund current budgets, in a similar way that the Government already offers compensation for exceptional costs such as those related to flooding.
 3. Require the Public Works Loan Board to allow an opportunity for authorities to repay debt without any early redemption premium or similar penalty.

There was no requirement for this Motion to be seconded as it was not the subject of debate at the meeting.

Cllr David Shakespeare, LGA Vice-Chairman, responded on behalf of the LGA

The General Assembly **agreed** to remit the motion Icelandic Banks to the LGA Executive.

Cllr Margaret Eaton OBE, Chairman, closed the Annual Meeting of the 2009 General Assembly

Dates of the Next Annual Meeting

Tuesday, 6 July 2010, in Bournemouth.