

Motion on Independent Local Government

1. Motion: Independent Local Government

Councillor Ruth Dombey, Leader of the London Borough of Sutton, supported by Councillor Marianne Overton of Lincolnshire County Council

Proposes that:

“This Association believes in local government as one of the cornerstones of democracy in the UK and a champion of the needs and ambitions of the people it represents.

We believe that decisions made on behalf of a community are best made by those directly elected to represent them. This is the most democratic approach and makes for best use of public money. We note the Prime Minister’s acknowledgement that local government is the most efficient part of the public sector.

We note the work of the Political & Constitutional Select Committee on the position of local government in the Constitution and its recommendation for a national debate on securing greater autonomy for the sector. In its own campaigning for independence for local government, this Association believes that:

- Councils should be accountable to their electorates and not to ministers of the Crown;
- Councils should be granted greater freedoms and flexibilities to drive economic growth;
- Councils should have the power to provide any local public service not explicitly reserved to another body;
- Councils should retain in full the proceeds of council tax and business rates, subject to retaining mechanisms for fairness and redistribution and that both these taxes should be determined by councils alone without central government interference;
- The burden of statutory duties and central compliance regimes should be lifted further; and
- Central government interference should be removed from decisions on councils’ electoral boundaries and governance models.

The General Assembly calls on the leadership of LGA to use its influence in the House of Commons and the House of Lords to introduce Private Members Bills that entrench local government’s freedoms in our Constitution and protect them against erosion by future governments.”

LGA Comment

The LGA exists to defend and promote the importance of local democratic accountability for the local public sector. The current over-centralised model of governance in England is no longer fit for purpose and is feeding disillusion with the democratic process. We welcome and

agree with this motion and intend to continue campaigning for a transformation of the model of governance in England that will give English voters the same sort of influence over local services at the ballot box that voters in the other countries of the UK, and in other major democracies, expect as a matter of course.