

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LG Group Executive
Date and time: 10am, Thursday 11 November 2010
Venue: The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Attendance

An attendance list is **attached** as an Appendix A to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1	Spending Review 2010	
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Stephen Jones, Group Finance Director, introduced this report, which summarises the outcomes of the Spending Review for local government and sets out the key points that are recommended to be pursued prior to the local government financial settlement being announced in early December.

Stephen stressed that although these were some of the biggest cuts in the public sector, some of the LG Group's key asks were met, at least in part, which will help authorities deal with the extremely difficult decisions ahead.

There was a full and wide ranging debate, where members from across the country expressed their concerns and views on the outcome of the Spending Review. These were noted by officers and will be incorporated into the Group's lobbying approach:

- The loss of the Working Neighbourhood Fund grant will have a significant impact on many authorities and the LGA should continue to lobby Government to ensure that they are clear about the additional impact this will have on top of authorities' required spending reductions.
- A priority concern for the sector is that the cuts are significantly front-loaded. The LG Group will be working with all member authorities over the coming months to deal with the changes in the time frame required by Government.
- The LGA should continue to highlight the depth of impact

these cuts will have on the sector as a whole, whilst acknowledging that different authorities will be impacted in varying degrees. It will be a challenge to get the balance of the debate right as the outcome of the CSR has had such a differential impact on the sector, but a consistent approach is necessary to influence the local government financial settlement in December.

- Extremely difficult decisions will have to be taken on floors and ceilings for the distribution of the formula grant, if large unpredictable swings in funding for local authorities are to be avoided. Although there is a very narrow window of opportunity, the LGA should use this time to lobby Government to ensure that these decisions are made as fairly and equitably as possible.
- Members suggested that further consultation with local authorities on the key issues for local government should be the basis of further work for the Group.

Decision

*1.1 Members **approved** the proposed lobbying approach, subject to the comments and recommendations made above and to further work to consult with the sector on key issues.*

Action

Officers to take forward Members recommendations

Stephen Jones

2 Post CSR – Where next?

Decision

*2.1 Members **agreed** to postpone this Item to the December meeting due to time pressures.*

Action

Officers to include this item in the next meeting of the Executive.

**Sarah Monaghan
Jo Miller**

3 Sector self regulation and improvement

Cllrs Gerald Vernon- Jackson, Bryony Rudkin, Simon Henig, Mayor Jules Pipe, Chris White, Paul Bettison and John Commons declared an interest in this item.

Cllr David Parsons CBE, Chair of the Improvement Programme Board, introduced this report, which provides an update on the abolition of the Audit Commission and the Comprehensive Area Assessment, and the work that the Group is doing with councils on self-regulation and improvement proposals.

Cllr Parsons stressed that feedback from authorities has clearly signalled that a new inspection regime should not replace the Comprehensive Area Assessment, and that the sector responded very positively to taking responsibility for its own performance. A high level paper on how local authorities wish to collaborate in peer review and sector led regulation will be presented to the Improvement Programme Board.

Members made the following comments which were noted by officers and will be taken forward in discussion of this item with the Improvement Programme Board:

- There has to be some mechanism of assurance in the system to ensure that underperforming authorities are identified and supported as necessary.
- Any system should be designed so that there is no unnecessary overlap in local government tiers.
- Lines of authority and responsibility should be clearly demarcated in peer review and self-assessment proposals to ensure they will be effective and authorities responsive to their outcomes.
- Proposals should not focus on councils alone, particularly in light of the current financial climate, and both partnership working and a flexible approach are necessary to deliver regulation and improvement work.
- Further work should be done with LEPs and GPs to ensure that good working relationships are established to enable strong partnership working.

Decision

The Executive noted:

- 3.1 The success of the LG Group's Freedom to Lead campaign for less inspection and regulation, and;*
- 3.2 the feedback from councils on the LG Group's self regulation and improvement proposals.*

Action

Officers to feed Members' comments through to the

Rob Whiteman

Improvement Programme Board discussions.

4. Place Based Productivity Programme

Cllr David Parsons CBE introduced this item, which summarises the work of the Place Based Productivity Programme to help councils respond to the significant funding challenges announced in the Spending Review.

Cllr Parsons summarised the work and successes of the programme to date, and invited Members to review and influence the shape of the next phase of the programme. A report tracking the next stage will be submitted to further meeting of the Executive.

Members made a number of comments which were noted by officers and will be taken forward in discussion of the programme with the Improvement Programme Board:

- Members approved the decision to slim down the nine previous workstreams to three. They stressed that this should dovetail in with CLG's workstreams to ensure that there is no duplication in the support offered to councils
- In light of the current financial climate, work should be focussed on the leadership stream to enable Members (and in particular, Leaders) to lead their communities through change as effectively as possible.

Decision

4.1 Members noted the work in progress.

Action

Officers to take Members' comments forward to the Improvement Programme Board discussion of this programme, and provide an update on the work of the programme at a further meeting of the Executive.

Rob Whiteman

5 LG Group Business Plan

Cllr David Parsons CBE introduced this report, which proposes a set of high level priorities for the LG Group for 2011/12 as the basis for next year's business plan, and reviews progress at the half year stage with delivering priorities in this year's business plan for the LG Group.

Helen Platts, Strategic Business Advisor (LGID) outlined the process for setting priorities for 2011/12, building on the RSG top-slice prospectus agreed by Members in September. These priorities will form the basis of the 2011/12 business plan and budget for the Group, subject to clearance by the LG Group Executive before the start of the new financial year.

Helen also presented the six month progress report for the 2010/11 LG Group Business Plan. The report shows that good progress is being made on most fronts and that the Group is on track to deliver a high proportion of objectives set out in the plan. The LG Group Audit & Scrutiny Panel will review the half year performance report in detail at their December meeting.

Members made a number of comments which were noted by officers and will be incorporated in the more detailed business plan which will be submitted to the Executive for approval before the start of the new financial year:

- In the current financial climate the LG Group will have to further refine its business plan and priorities and deliver it with less staff.
- As the Group's central bodies become more integrated it is essential that the whole LG Group 'offer' is communicated clearly to member authorities to ensure that they are aware of the national added value of the Group to the sector.

Decision

*5.1 Members **agreed** the high level priorities for 2011/12 as the basis for more detailed work on next year's LG Group business plan..*

6 LG Group Member Structures – Outside Bodies

John Ransford, LG Group Chief Executive introduced this report, which outlines the appointments to outside bodies made by the LG Group boards and panels for the 2010/11 cycle.

John stressed that this list is subject to change, and will be revised in line with changes within the organisation.

Decision

*6.1 Members **noted** the list of appointments to outside bodies.*

Action

Officers to amend the list as requested by Members.

Cathy Boyle

7 Note of LGA Leadership Board

Decision

*7.1 Members **noted** the minute of the previous LGA Leadership Board which was tabled.*

8 Note of last LG Group Executive meeting

Decision

*8.1 The LG Group Executive **agreed** the note of the last meeting.*

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 9 December 2010 at **2.00pm** in Local Government House. There will be a Christmas Drinks reception after the meeting in The Terrace Lounge.