

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LG Group Executive
Date and time: 10am, Thursday 13 January
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
1	<p>Local Government Finance Settlement 2011-12 and 2012-13</p> <p>Stephen Jones introduced this paper, which summarises the proposals in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2011-12 and 2012-13. These proposals implement at individual local authority level the decisions on future CLG grant levels made in Spending Review 2010. Stephen outlined the proposed LGA response to the statutory consultation on the settlement, and stressed the difficulties in the settlement for local government. In particular, Stephen emphasised that the extremely low level of business rates income which has been set is a particular issue for councils, as well as the methodology used to deal with the funding for concessionary fares.</p> <p>Members made a number of detailed comments, which were noted by officers, and will be incorporated into the LGA response to the consultation. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members thanked LGA officers for their robust stance publically on the settlement and emphasised that cross-party working on key issues for local government in the settlement was essential.• Members emphasised that although lobbying work to change key issues in the settlement should continue, the LG Group should also focus on how to support councils in delivering these savings with minimal effects to frontline services.• Members expressed concern about the reduction in formula grant from education authorities to pay for academies' central functions, irrespective of whether academies exist in their areas.• Members emphasised the unfairness in the methodology used to deal with the funding for concessionary fares through formula grant, which will have the effect of permanently depriving a number	

of authorities of substantial funds hitherto used for their own discretionary spending.

- Members expressed strong concern at recent negative national media coverage, much of which appeared to originate from some CLG ministers, and put forward a number of views about how the LGA and councils might respond. However there was general consensus that the sector should respond to this, and to the financial challenges, in a mature way.
- Baroness Eaton urged members initially to make their views and concerns known via their own councils, together with the LGA and council conservative groups. She suggested that the Group Executive review the position at the next meeting in February.

Decision

Members:

1. **Noted** the work done to pursue the principal Spending Review lobbying objectives;
2. **Approved** the outline response to the 2011-12 settlement consultation as set out in paragraphs 2-13 above;
3. **Noted** that the LGA Leadership Board will be asked to approve the full LGA response to the settlement consultation.

Action

The LG Group Chairman and LGA Office Holders to lead the LGA's lobbying work on the Local Government Finance Settlement in an appropriate way with Ministers at CLG and discuss progress with the Executive at its next meeting.

LGA Office Holders

2 Local Government Self Regulation and Improvement

Cllr David Parsons introduced this report, which sets out the LG Group's draft proposals to the sector on self-regulation and improvement, which will be finalised and agreed by the Improvement Programme Board at their meeting on 18 January.

Members considered the contents of the report, and made the following comments:

- There are benefits in adopting a Total Place approach to developing national tools for self-regulation and storing performance information centrally. Working with those outside the sector will better provide for a more comprehensive understanding of the performance of local areas.
- Information should be available to residents as well as officials, so

the models used to store information need to be accessible.

- It is essential that this approach is owned by councils and particularly by elected Members. Strong Member input is also needed to support peer challenge and review.
- The LG Group need to outline a clear strategy for supporting vulnerable authorities.

Decision

Members **endorsed** the proposed response subject to their views and comments.

Action

Officers to feed the LG Group Executive comments through to the LG Group Improvement Programme Board who would consider the draft proposals later in the month.

**Rob
Whiteman**

3 LG Group Business Plan 2011-12

Cllr David Parsons introduced the LG Group draft Business Plan for 2011-12.

Decision

Members **agreed** the 2011-12 LG Group Business Plan

Action

Officers to submit further updates on progress against the 2011-12 Business Plan in March 2011.

**Helen
Platts**

4 Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS – progress report on the NHS White Paper and LG Group responses

Cllr David Rogers introduced this item and updated the Executive on recent developments on the NHS reforms and their implications for local government. Since this item was last brought to the Executive, the Government has published its response to the consultation on the NHS White Paper and accepted several of the changes the LG Group proposed. These changes will be reflected in the Health and Social Care Bill, due to be published on 19 January.

Members made a number of detailed comments, which were noted by officers, including:

- Members welcomed the proposals for the extension of duties in

relation to health and scrutiny to all providers and commissioners of health services.

- Members suggested that the Community Wellbeing Programme Board and the Children and Young People Programme Board should work closely together on key issues for children and young people in the Bill.
- Members stressed that there are unique aspects in the way health services are provided in London, and asked the Group to ensure that this was considered.
- If there is a transfer of staff to local authorities as part of these changes, it is essential that there is a budget for this and clear lines of accountability.
- The Government should build on existing good practice and, wherever possible, 'test bed' new arrangements.

Decision

Members:

1. **endorsed** the Group's proposed activity in response to the NHS and Social Care Bill; and
2. **confirmed** LG Group support for the Department of Health's Responsibility Deal.

5 Note of the LGA Leadership Board

The note of the previous Leadership Board meeting was tabled **for information**.

6 Note of the last LG Group Executive meeting

Decision

Members agreed the note of the last meeting.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 10 February at 10.00am in Local Government House.