

LGA Executive

Agenda

Thursday 8 December 2011
2.30pm

The Westminster Suite (8th floor)
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the LGA Executive
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

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LGA Executive
8 December 2011

There will be a meeting of the LGA Executive at:

2.30pm on Thursday 8 December 2011 in the Westminster Suite, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

Immediately following the LGA Executive festive drinks for members will take place in the Terrace Lounge.

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.

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.

Labour: Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative: Angela Page: 020 7664 3264 email: angela.page@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat: Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent: Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independent.group@local.gov.uk

Location

A map showing the location of Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

Lucy Ellender Tel: 020 7664 3173; Fax: 020 7664 3232;
e-mail: lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk

Carers' Allowance: As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £6.08 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

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LGA Executive

Updated: 6.10.11

LGA Executive - Membership 2011/2012

Councillor	Authority	Position/ Role
Conservative		
Sir Merrick Cockell	RB Kensington & Chelsea	Chairman
Gary Porter	South Holland DC	Vice-chairman/Group Leader
Robert Light	Kirklees Council	Deputy-chairman
Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC	Deputy-chairman
Robert Gordon DL	Hertfordshire CC	Deputy-chairman
David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB	Chairman, CYP PB
David Parsons CBE	Leicestershire CC	Chairman, Env & Housing PB
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Council	Chairman, LGR
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC	Chairman, Improvement PB
Labour		
David Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC	Vice-chairman/Group Leader
Sharon Taylor	Stevenage BC	Deputy-chairman
Steve Reed	Lambeth LB	Deputy-chairman
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham LB	Chair, Workforce PB
Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Council	Chair, E&T PB
Mehboob Khan	Kirklees Council	Chair, SSC PB
Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC	Chair, E & I PB
Liberal Democrat		
Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City	Vice-chairman/Group Leader
Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC	Deputy-chairman
David Rogers OBE	East Sussex CC	Chair, CWB PB
Chris White	Hertfordshire CC	Chair, CTS PB
Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC	Member
Independent		
Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire CC	Vice-chairman/Group Leader
Regional Representatives (10)		
Peter Martin (Cons)	Essex CC	East of Eng. LGA
Paul Carter (Cons)	Kent CC	SE Eng Councils
Angus Campbell (Cons)	Dorset CC	SW Leaders
Philip Atkins (Cons)	Staffordshire CC	WM Councils

Martin Hill OBE	(Cons)	Lincolnshire CC	EM Councils
Mayor Jules Pipe	(Lab)	Hackney LB	London Councils
Paul Watson	(Lab)	Sunderland City Council	NE Councils
Ian Greenwood	(Lab)	Bradford MDC	LG Yorks & Humber
Sir Richard Leese CBE	(Lab)	Manchester City	North West Regional Leaders' Board
Robert Dutton OBE	(Ind)	Wrexham County Borough	Welsh LGA
Named substitutes			
Simon Henig		Durham County Council	NE Councils
Gordon Keymer CBE		Tandridge DC	SE Eng Councils
Paul Watkins		Dover DC	SE Eng Councils

Non-voting Members of LGA Executive

Cllr/Local Authority	Political Group	Representing
Lord Peter Smith	Labour	LG Leadership
Stephen Castle (Essex CC)	Cons	Resources Panel
Neil Clarke (Rushcliffe)	Cons	District Councils Network
Stephen Houghton CBE	Labour	SIGOMA
Roger Phillips (Herefordshire CC)	Cons	County Councils Network
Edward Lord OBE JP	Liberal Democrat	Local Partnerships

LGA Executive Attendance 2011-2012

Councillors	15.09.11	13.10.11	10.11.11	8.12.11	12.01.12	9.02.12	15.03.12	17.05.12	14.06.12	12.07.12
Conservative Group										
Sir Merrick Cockell	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Gary Porter	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Robert Light	Yes	No	Yes							
Andrew Lewer	Yes	Yes	No							
Robert Gordon DL	Yes	Yes	Yes							
David Simmonds	Yes	Yes	No							
David Parsons CBE	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Paul Bettison	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Peter Fleming	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Labour Group										
David Sparks OBE	No	Yes	Yes							
Sharon Taylor	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Steve Reed	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Peter Box CBE	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Mehboob Khan	Yes	Yes	Yes							
David Wilcox OBE	Yes	Yes	No							
Lib Dem Group										
Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Yes	No	Yes							
David Rogers OBE	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Chris White	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Jill Shortland OBE	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Independent										
Marianne Overton	Yes	Yes	Yes							
Regional Representatives										
Peter Martin	No	Yes	Yes							
Paul Carter	Yes	No	Yes							
Angus Campbell	Yes	Yes	No							
Philip Atkins	Yes	No	No							
Martin Hill OBE	Yes	Yes	Yes							

Agenda

LGA Executive

Thursday 8 December 2011

2.30pm

The Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House

Part 1

	Item	Page	Time
1.	Report of the Children and Young People Programme Board	3	2.30pm
2.	Adoption Update	17	2.40pm
3.	Progress report from the Children's Improvement Board (CIB)	25	3.05pm
4.	Autumn Statement update	35	3.30pm
5.	Regional Report: Cllr Martin Hill OBE, EM Councils – tabled		3.45pm
6.	LGA Membership Subscriptions	41	4.00pm
7.	Note of LGA Leadership Board		4.10pm
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Part 2: CONFIDENTIAL

	Item	Page	Time
9.	Strategic Workforce Priorities		4.15pm

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 12 January 2012 - 2.15pm, Local Government House

Report of the Children and Young People Programme Board

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report outlines the priorities and work programme of the Children and Young People Programme Board.

Recommendation

This report is intended to inform the debate with the LGA Executive.

Action

Officers to take account of any comments and any actions arising out of the discussion.

Contact officer: Helen Johnston
Position: Head of Programmes
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Report of the Children and Young People Programme Board

Background

1. Reflecting the LGA's wider aims to achieve greater devolution to local government and helping councils to tackle their challenges using a sector-led approach, the Children and Young People Programme Board agreed its priorities in January 2011. We have already enjoyed several successes in both our lobbying, policy and improvement activities, including securing funding for a sector-led approach to improvement through the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) and securing a commitment in the Schools White Paper to a "strong, strategic role for councils in education".

The priorities

2. The Children and Young People Programme Board's priorities for the year are to ensure that:
 - 2.1. Councils' retain a strong strategic role in education in a system where schools have more autonomy.
 - 2.2. Children's health is a priority in the planned changes to the health service.
 - 2.3. Social workers are freed up from unnecessary bureaucracy to allow them to spend more time with children and their families through influencing the implementation of the Munro review.
 - 2.4. Children's services are provided with improvement support for safeguarding, through the Children's Safeguarding peer review programme and Lead member induction events.
 - 2.5. Councils have the powers and resources they need to reduce youth offending and the use of custody for young people.
 - 2.6. Councils are able to reconfigure their youth services to respond to the severe financial pressures they are facing. This work is being undertaken in partnership with the National Youth Agency (NYA).
 - 2.7. Improvements in children's services are made through delivery of a new sector-led improvement and support programme (funded through 10.5m DfE grant) under the direction of the Children's Improvement Board (CIB).

Item 1

Work so far...

3. Since the General Election, a key Children and Young People Programme Board priority has been winning a continuing, strategic role for councils in education as increasing numbers of schools become academies. The LGA has supported a mixed market of schools, including academies, but with councils ensuring fairness and challenging performance as the champions for children and their families. This resonated with the Government and was successful in influencing the Schools White Paper which outlined “a strong strategic role” for councils in education.
4. The focus of our lobbying now is to flesh out what the council role will be in practice. We are jointly funding, with the Department for Education (DfE), action learning research on the council role in education to better understand how local authorities are adapting to an increasingly diverse and autonomous schools system. We will be working with a small representative group of different types of council in a wide range of geographical areas, with different proportions of academies. A steering group has been set up to commission and oversee this work, including local government representatives, with Cllr Stephen Castle representing the LGA, Academies, Academy sponsors and officials from DfE and the Department for Communities and Local Government. An interim report will be produced in January, with the final report in June.
5. Reform of schools funding will be a key issue in the coming months, with the Government committed to producing a ‘fairer funding formula’ for schools. We have been lobbying hard to retain a council role in agreeing local funding formulae with schools; and for a degree of local discretion in any national funding formula. The consultation document issued over the summer accepts the case for some local discretion, so the focus now is on the detail, and the extent of the local role.
6. An announcement on the amounts to be topsliced from revenue support grant to fund academies’ central costs is expected in the next two weeks (“LACSEG”). We have robustly challenged the Government proposals as way out of line with the cost savings to councils as academies convert and we have supported 29 councils in seeking judicial review.
7. The Children’s Improvement Board (CIB) has been established to oversee the delivery of the improvement programme. The CIB is a partnership Board, with a single representative from the LGA, ADCS, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Department for Education (DfE). CIB is leading the way on the development of a sector-led model of local government improvement and its success is crucial for LGA attempts to promote a sector-led approach. However, the high profile nature of children’s issues, particularly safeguarding, also means it is a high-risk project.

Item 1

8. The CIB has already achieved some early wins with over 40 councils now working with each other and the CIB to develop mutual peer challenge and support improvement. A programme of support on children's centre services has also been completed. 26 local authorities have signed up to pilot payment by results. Rapid support has been arranged for councils with the most acute improvement needs.
9. However, many more councils need to be actively involved if this is to be a successful sector-led programme, resources need to be effectively devolved to regions to support more sector-led work. A balance needs to be struck between nationally driven policy initiatives and improvement needs identified by councils. Given the scale of the programme it has been under-resourced in terms of support and this needs to be addressed as a priority.
10. A more detailed briefing is attached as **Appendix A**.

Conclusion and next steps

11. We will continue to pursue our priorities in the work programme to ensure greater devolution to local government and helping councils to tackle their challenges using a sector-led approach.

Financial Implications

12. This programme of work is a key business plan priority for the LGA and will be resourced from within existing budgets.

Extracts from an LGA Children and Young People Programme Board Briefing on the Board's priorities for 2011/12

Achieving greater devolution for local government	Helping councils tackle their challenges through:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education reforms – lobbying for the powers and funding that councils need to support their strong strategic role in education as proposed in the schools White Paper • ensuring that children's 'health' is a priority in the planned change to the health service • working with the Youth Justice Board to support the council role in reducing youth offending and the use of custody for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a sector-led improvement and support programme, supported by £10.5m of funding won from DfE • influencing the implementation of the Munro Review of child protection to free up front-line staff from unnecessary bureaucracy to allow them to spend more time with children and their families • supporting councils to take on a more strategic role in education • supporting councils to achieve increased productivity.

[Taken from *Your Local Government Group*
(<http://www.local.gov.uk/services>)]

1. Children's Safeguarding peer challenge programme

The LGA's Children's Safeguarding peer challenge programme has been developed over the past two years.

Our current position

The key purpose of the peer challenge programme is to help local councils fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities. Twenty six challenges have been delivered so far this year and there are 13 more booked for autumn 2011. The programme is delivered by LGG in partnership with ADCS, the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). It is complementary to initiatives by SOLACE to support chief executives in this area and the work of the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services to support Directors of Children's Services. LGA lead on the recruitment, training and accreditation of officer and member peers. Currently there are 153 officer peers and 25 member peers with two further accreditation centres for 32 peers planned for the autumn.

Next steps for the LGA

The Children's Safeguarding peer challenge programme will now form part of the wider CIB sector-led offer. Councils are entitled to a free Children's Safeguarding Challenge every three years.

2. The Munro Review of Child Protection

Last year the Government asked Professor Munro to conduct an independent review of child protection. The final report was published in May 2011, with a series of recommendations designed to reform the system. The Government response largely accepted the recommendations, although with some caveats on timing, resource and certain details still to be worked through.

Our current position

The Review has a welcome emphasis on increasing the scope for professional judgment and reducing overly burdensome central prescription and bureaucracy so that social workers can spend more time with children and families. This is something councils have long argued for. It also recognises that other services e.g. health and schools have a role to play.

Next steps for the LGA

Local government had significant input to the Review and this is expected to continue through implementation. This will be a long-term reform and there is much work to be done to ensure its success. It will be particularly important for LGA to influence the Government's consideration of early help provision and to ensure safeguarding is a central consideration in health reform.

3. The Family Justice Review

The interim report of the Family Justice Review, published for consultation in March identified that the system is under huge strain; the average case took 53 weeks in 2010 and this is likely to rise significantly. Lengthy delays are not only financially costly, but also detrimental to children's well-being. Numbers of cases have risen in recent years, but this is not the sole reason for delays. The way the system operates also has an impact and the interim report makes recommendations designed to address this. A challenge for local authorities to improve care planning and court skills of social workers has been raised by the Review.

Our current position

LGA wrote to the Review endorsing the consultation response submitted by ADCS. The letter specifically welcomed the focus on the needs of children in the system and proposals to reduce delays and their associated harm. It highlighted that the courts have an essential role to play in safeguarding and that it is vital to get reform right for children, young people and families.

Next steps for the LGA

The proposals are likely to be resisted and lobbied against by the judiciary and other stakeholders. The final report is due in the autumn and it is likely that LGA would need to lobby Government if the recommendations are to be implemented. We will also work with the Social Work Reform Board on addressing the concerns raised about social workers' skills.

4. Youth remand proposals in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill

The Bill, published in June, paves the way for the transfer of funding responsibility to councils for young people held on remand and will give this group of young people 'looked after' status. Related provisions aim to reduce the number of young people remanded to custody.

Our current position

LGA supports the devolution of youth custody budgets in order that councils have an incentive to invest in prevention. It will be essential, however, to ensure that the full, true costs are transferred to local authority budgets. We agree that children in custody should be effectively supported, but have concerns that automatically giving them all full 'looked after' status may not be the most appropriate or proportionate route to achieve this. It would also have significant financial implications for councils. Cllr David Simmonds gave evidence to the Bill Committee on this issue, highlighting our concerns.

Next steps for the LGA

We are liaising with the Youth Justice Board and ADCS on the details of the transfer; financial modelling to ensure the responsibilities are fully funded; and support for councils to prepare for these new responsibilities. We are exploring options for effective and proportionate local authority support for young people remanded to custody.

5. Young Offender Education

From September 2010, councils have had a duty to secure education for young offenders. The contracts for these services, which end in July, are held by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and are due to transfer to councils from April 2012. The Ministry of Justice is again considering interim and long term solutions for funding and commissioning.

Our current position

A YPLA (or other central body) role in allocating funding represents an unnecessary layer of administration. Councils already have the responsibility to secure education provision for young people in custody and are well placed to commission these services, building on relationships with local education providers. Moreover, they have committed resources in preparing for the transfer of contracts. Councils will need time and resources to pursue the option of commissioning new providers; a long-term solution therefore needs to be agreed as soon as possible.

Next steps for the LGA

LGA will continue to work with the relevant local authorities and to make the case for councils to be given this commissioning role.

6. Children's Health

Children's health services have traditionally been viewed as one of the Cinderellas of the health service¹ and there is a danger that children's health issues will be overlooked in the new public health proposals contained in the Health and Social Care Bill.

Our current position

Councils and their partners need to work together at a local level to address issues such as safeguarding; commissioning services for children; meeting the particular needs of vulnerable children and young people; and integrating health and social care. So the LGA has been working with stakeholders to identify shared priorities and to share ideas for a support programme for councils and local partners. The Association has also been lobbying during the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill to seek clarity on how each component part of the NHS architecture, and in particular the NHS Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups, will be held accountable for safeguarding issues.

Next steps for the LGA

This piece of work is in its early stages of development but it will remain a key priority for the Board for the remainder of the year.

¹ *Getting it right for children and young people*, Kennedy Review, September 2010:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_119446.pdf

7. Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The DfE Green Paper *Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*² proposes earlier intervention and support for those with SEND; a single assessment and 'Education, Health and Care Plan'; and devolving resources to create 'personalised budgets'. To explore the proposals in the Green Paper further, DfE and the Department for Health have launched a 'Pathfinder project', offering up to £150,000 per council applying in partnership and with PCTs and voluntary and community organisations.

Our current position

In our response to the Green Paper we supported the proposals for a single assessment and Education, Health and Care Plan and for extending personalised budgets to some aspects of SEND. However, we have stressed that many councils are already working to achieve the aims described in the Green Paper, but find their ability to do so is restricted by bureaucracy, legal impediments and lack of clarity about responsibility and funding.

Next steps for the LGA

We are seeking to influence the development of the Pathfinder projects to reflect a sector-led approach to improvement, so they can make a meaningful contribution to helping local government improve the delivery of its services, as well as providing information to Government. We are negotiating our involvement in awarding the bids, the evaluation of the projects and how their good practice will be shared.

8. Young people's participation in education, employment and training

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2010 raised the age of compulsory participation by young people in some form of education or training to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015. This means that by 2015 even young people that have left full-time education and are employed will have to be in a job with training up to the age of 18. The Act gave councils the statutory duty to 'secure that enough suitable education and training is provided' for young people over compulsory school age but under 19 and gave councils powers to enforce the raising of the participation age.

Our current position

Following the General Election, the new government made a number of changes that have significantly changed councils' direct powers and access to funds to deliver on this new duty. Changes to 16 – 19 funding mean that funds to FE and sixth form colleges now flow via the YPLA directly to colleges (rather than via councils), reducing the ability of councils to influence the patterns of post-16 provision. The current Education Bill will end councils' responsibility for providing universal careers advice to all young people through Connexions, which was seen as a key tool in encouraging wider

² <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027>

participation – schools and sixth form colleges will now have this duty. And the commencement of councils' powers to enforce compulsory participation has been delayed.

The implications of these changes is still being worked through, but LGA is working with DfE to ease the transition to the new arrangements, including a careers summit for councils in July and work with the Department on pilots with 16 councils to explore the council role in delivering the rise in the participation age.

Next steps for the LGA

The raising of the participation age will coincide with a period of increasing youth unemployment and the Children and Young People Programme Board is working with the Economy and Transport Board to develop a new programme of work to support councils in both these areas. This will build on the Association's *Hidden Talents* work³, adapting it to the new policy landscape.

³ <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=2109543> (login required)

Adoption Update

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The Government has made addressing the fall in numbers of adoptions and the delays in the system a priority. Local government plays a key role in the adoption process, alongside the court system. This paper sets out the current situation and key issues in order that members can discuss the implications and provide direction to officers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to discuss the implications and agree how they wish to proceed.

Action

LGA officers to action.

Contact officer: Helen Johnston
Position: Head of Programme
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E-mail: helen.johnston@local.gov.uk

Adoption Update

Background

1. The Government has made addressing the fall in numbers of adoptions and the delays in the system a priority, with the Prime Minister, Secretary of State Michael Gove and Children's Minister Tim Loughton all backing a drive for improvement.
2. The numbers of adoptions rose between 1999 and 2004, remained fairly static until 2006 and then began to fall. Figures published on 28 September 2011 show that 3,050 looked after children were adopted during the year ending 31 March 2011, a decrease of 5 per cent from 2010 and a decrease of 8 per cent since 2007. Only 60 of those adopted in the year to 31 March were aged under one year old. There has also been a decrease in the number of looked after children placed for adoption. This figure has fallen from 2,720 in 2007, to 2,500 in 2010 with a further fall to 2,450 in 2011. These figures may not reflect any changes to the number of adoption orders applied for this year, as decisions on the applications can take over a year to be made in the courts.
3. The adoption process takes a long time, with the average time between a child being taken into care and being adopted of 2 years and 7 months. Delays have been attributed to both local authorities and the court system (see sections below). These delays probably account for the small numbers of babies under the age of one year old being adopted.

Local authority performance

4. On the 31 October the Government published league tables of local authority performance against 15 indicators for children in care, including in relation to the number of children adopted. There are significant variations in the levels of adoption between local areas. Figures for the year to 31 March 2011 show that the proportion of looked after children adopted varied from 2 per cent to 27 per cent.
5. How meaningful the measures in the league tables are have been questioned, for example they do not take into account that adoption is not possible or appropriate for some looked after children, such as those who are still subject to care proceedings or are accommodated at the request of their parents. Some children may not want to be adopted and there are other forms of stable and beneficial placements such as long term foster care. The Department for Education (DfE) is further considering the data and how it is presented.

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6. Reasons that have been suggested for variation in adoption rates include local policies and practice; the stability and experience of adoption teams; misinterpretation of legislation; and attitudes towards foster care and adoption versus supporting birth parents (see section on thresholds below). However, there appears to be no robust, conclusive evidence that explains the variation.
7. The Minister has stated that he wishes to shine a light on good local authority practice, but also that "...local authorities should be in no doubt that we expect to see improvements in the coming months. We simply will not tolerate continued failure when that failure means a child's future is put at risk". It is unclear as yet what action the Government might take if it continues to view a local authority's performance as poor; we understand this is currently under consideration. A National Adoption Agency was proposed by Martin Narey to address this variation in performance, although this was rejected by the Secretary of State in his speech at the National Children and Adult Services Conference on 20 October.
8. The Children's Improvement Board has identified adoption as one of its priorities for policy implementation through the sector-led improvement programme for children's services.

Other Government activity

9. Martin Narey, former Chief Executive of Barnado's and previous head of the prison service was appointed the Government's adoption adviser following a report for the Times newspaper in July this year, exploring the fall in adoption rates and making a series of recommendations, which are referred to in this paper. Narey was appointed as the Government's adoption adviser shortly thereafter and is investigating how the adoption process could be improved and sped up.
10. The DfE has funded the charities Coram and Barnado's for a two year programme to work with a number of authorities, providing an analysis of their adoption service and an improvement plan for the local authority to implement. It is expected that this programme will result in wider learning for the sector next year.
11. Following the Foster Carer's Charter, the Government has also published an Adopters' Charter, which sets out what prospective adopters can expect. It wants all local authorities to adopt its principles.
12. In partnership with the British Association of Adoption and Fostering, the Government has backed a campaign to get more people to come forward to foster or adopt a child.

Item 2

13. A Green Paper on both the adoption and fostering systems is currently being considered, with publication potentially in the first half of 2012.

Thresholds

14. There are differing views regarding the extent to which birth parents should be supported in improving their parenting and the point at which children should be taken into care and then placed for adoption.
15. Narey and Ministers have stated that children are being left in neglectful and abusive situations for too long before being taken into care and that unnecessary delays are then caused by councils failing to initially pursue adoption. It is suggested that social workers can place too high a priority on the rights of the parent/s, sometimes to the detriment of the best interests of the child and that the system can be too optimistic about the capacity for neglectful parents to improve. Narey also argues that there are strongly held views at practitioner, manager and political level about the negative consequences of taking a child into care, as opposed to keeping them within the parental home.
16. However, professionals such as Directors of Children's Services and social workers have presented an alternative view: that some families can and do improve with professional support and that social workers are not 'anti-adoption' but weigh such important decisions carefully, including the alternatives to adoption, such as Special Guardianship by family or friends. The Association of Directors of Children's Services has also sought to distinguish between improving adoption rates within the current framework of legislation, guidance and practice and the wider debate about whether more children should be taken into care and adopted as the best means to improve their life chances.
17. As has been noted in the past, social workers can be criticised for either stepping in too early and breaking up families or for leaving children too long in unacceptable situations. There is a balance to be struck between reducing delay in the system, whilst also allowing for quality decision making by professionals on what is in the best interests of a particular child. The Munro review of the child protection system called for much greater freedom for social work professionals to be able to use their judgment. The Social Work Reform Board is playing a key role in improving the education, training and development of social workers.

The court system

18. As described above, councils have been criticised for delays in taking children into care and in pursuing adoption. However, significant delays occur in the court system.

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19. The Family Justice Review was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and DfE. The final report published in November identified that the system, which deals with care and adoption proceedings amongst other public and private law, is under huge strain. An average case in the county court takes 60 weeks and many take much longer. It acknowledges that these delays contribute to the length of time that it takes for a child to be adopted. The report also highlights that with 20,000 children waiting for a decision in the courts, delay is likely to rise further.
20. Numbers of cases have risen in recent years, as have referrals to children's social care, but this is not the sole reason for delays. The way the system operates also has an impact and the report makes a number of recommendations designed to address this. The LGA welcomed both the interim and final reports, which focus on the needs of children in the family justice system and make recommendations to reduce delays and their associated harm.
21. The Government's response to the review is expected by January. The extent to which it decides to implement the recommendations will be pivotal to whether delays in both care and adoption proceedings can be significantly reduced.

Ethnicity

22. Concern has been raised in many quarters about ethnicity matching holding up adoptions for BME children and white prospective adoptive parents being turned away purely on the basis of their ethnicity. The Narey report states that white children in care are three times more likely to be adopted than black children. Black children also take on average more than 50 per cent longer to be placed for adoption than children from other ethnic groups.
23. The law states that due consideration should be given to a child's cultural and ethnic background, but also that the impact of delay on a child should also be taken into account. There are differing views on the importance of ethnicity matching to the success of an adoption. Narey argued in his report that the cultural and ethnicity elements of legislation are too rigidly interpreted by social workers.
24. Statutory guidance was re-issued by the Government in February 2011 with a strong message from Ministers that it is not enough to deny a child a loving home with adoptive parents only on the basis that they don't share the same ethnicity. The impact of this change on practice is not yet known. LGA could consider initiating research about the effect of this or the extent to which this remains an issue.

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Other issues

25. Other issues raised by the Narey report include the provision of post-adoption support and the importance of local authorities not reducing provision; the role of voluntary adoption agencies and the potential for social impact bond approach to enable councils to fund the fees; and social worker preparedness and training.

Conclusions and next steps

26. Adoption is a complex and emotive issue, with factors contributing to the fall in numbers and to delays that are both within and without local government's control.
27. It is now a priority for central Government and as with other aspects of child protection has implications for local government's reputation and ability to drive improvement in the sector.
28. Options that members may wish to consider might include research into some of the issues raised; lobbying Government to implement the recommendations of the Family Justice Review final report when published; working with councils through sector-led improvement arrangements; an event or summit to explore some of the issues and share best practice.

Financial Implications

29. The LGA's work on this issue falls within the budgeted resource for the Children and Young People programme.

Progress report from the Children's Improvement Board (CIB)

Purpose of report

To update members of the Executive on the work of the CIB and to invite feedback.

Summary

This report updates the Executive on the work of the CIB and invites comments on progress.

Recommendations

That members of the Executive comment on the work of the CIB and the role of members in children's services self-improvement and specifically on the questions set out in **paragraph 13**:

What are the Executive's views on the best ways to:

1. Build political support for children's services self-improvement, particularly at regional level.
2. Increase the supply of member peers to provide challenge and mentoring to councils.
3. Build momentum and ensure the engagement of all councils.

Action

That staff from the CIB team and the LGA take forward the work programme in the light of the Executive's comments

Contact officer: Alison Miller
Position: Policy Adviser, programme team
Phone no: 020 7664 3036
E-mail: alison.miller@local.gov.uk

Progress report from the Children's Improvement Board (CIB)

Background

1. The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) is a partnership between the LGA, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), supported by the Department for Education (DfE). The Board is charged with developing a system for children's services self-improvement which engages all councils and provides timely, additional support to those who are in difficulty. The work of the Board is funded by DfE for £9.3 million in this financial year.

Engaging all councils

2. At the heart of the work of the CIB is a commitment to engage all councils in self-improvement. Building on their normal processes of self-assessment and review, councils are asked to open this up to external challenge by their peers. To support this, all directors of children's services have been asked to donate five days of their or a senior manager's time to provide peer challenge support to other councils. This peer challenge will be able to focus on particular areas of difficulty identified by the council or areas at risk of poor performance.
3. Alongside mutual peer challenge arranged between councils, all councils will be able to access both the programme of peer reviews on children's safeguarding and an entitlement to a corporate peer challenge every three years.
4. Work to support peer challenge between councils is underway with around 40 "early adopter" councils. Some of these – London and East Midlands – are working in regions. At this point, it appears that councils are more likely to engage where others in their region are part of a common effort.
5. With this in mind part of the CIB's budget will shortly be devolved to regions to support work on the ground. Peer challenge will be a priority for all regions but regions will also be offering early support to those councils at risk of poor performance and support for local implementation of key national policy initiatives.
6. As part of this, regions have nominated children's improvement leads from among their lead members for children, directors of children's services and chief executives. A list of these regional leads is attached as **Appendix A**.

Supporting councils with good practice and data

7. The CIB is also supporting a number of pieces of work which will help equip all councils with tools to understand their services and their performance. Contracts have been let to:

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- 7.1. Ensure continuation of previous work to validate and disseminate good practice research and evidence of what works.
- 7.2. Secure a supply of specialists from the sector to contribute to policy implementation and improvement support.
- 7.3. Identify the key items of nationally available performance information that councils need at local level to understand their performance. This work will include the development of better information about safeguarding as recommended by the Munro Review.

Implementing policy on the ground

8. The CIB has agreed that as part of its work it will support councils in the local delivery of national policy initiatives. A successful project on children's centres services has involved around 40 councils and, given the level of interest shown by councils, support from the CIB in this area will continue. Twenty six councils are also trialling payment by results for children's centre services.
9. For the remainder of this year, and continuing into next, dependent on funding, the CIB has agreed that policy priorities should be:
 - 9.1. Key aspects of the Munro Review of Child Protection - developing performance data and wider performance information (linked to development of local authority data profiles and knowledge hub); supporting effective social work practice and ensuring that the sector learns from serious case reviews and the evidence base of what works.
 - 9.2. Early Intervention – developing a local 'Early Help' offer; the availability of early support for individual children is likely to form part of the new Ofsted inspection methodology.
 - 9.3. Youth Services Improvement.
 - 9.4. Commissioning and Productivity in children's services including a specific focus on developing new and innovative services for young people.
 - 9.5. Improving Adoption and Support for Children in Care.

Support for councils in difficulty

10. As well as encouraging all councils to take ownership of self-improvement, members of the CIB team are working directly with councils who are in intervention or are requiring high levels of support. The team has been able to pull together packages of support including direct input from other councils

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quickly, making full and flexible use of the first hand expertise of children's services and networks of contacts. The CIB has also been able to offer additional funding to those councils in the greatest need of support and who need to make rapid improvement. These packages of support include peer mentoring by elected members as it is frequently the case that local authorities need development in political as well as professional leadership.

Issues and challenges

11. The programme of work supported by CIB is high profile. Making a difference in this area will be a key test of whether local government can make a reality of self-improvement, moving away from top down control through performance targets and reducing inspection. Ministers are taking a close interest in progress and have high expectations of the speed at which things will change and the impact on councils' performance. In order to be credible, local councils will need to demonstrate that they are moving quickly towards universal engagement, moving beyond the relatively small number of councils who have come forward as early adopters. All this will need to happen at a time when there are huge pressures on children's services and on councils generally.
12. To be successful, the CIB's work programme needs committed political leadership in regions and local authorities and engagement of councillors in providing a political dimension to peer challenge and improvement support. Central government recognises that this leadership can only come from local councils themselves and they will be looking for evidence that councils can provide it.

Key questions for the Executive

13. This is a significant programme of work which is a very visible and challenging test of the sector's willingness and ability to self-improve. Its success will depend on political as well as professional commitment and leadership. In view of this, what are the Executive's views on the best ways to:
 - 13.1. Build political support for children's services self-improvement, particularly at regional level.
 - 13.2. Increase the supply of member peers to provide challenge and mentoring to councils.
 - 13.3. Build momentum and ensure the engagement of all councils.

Financial implications

14. Funding for the programme is provided by DfE. The programme is being hosted by the LGA which claims part of this funding as payment for services provided

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by the organisation. In addition to this, the LGA provides staff time to contribute to the CIB's work, in support of the LGA's business plan priority to deliver an effective approach to sector-based support in children's services.

Children's Improvement Regional Leads

Region	Lead member	Chief Exec	DCS	Comments
East Midlands	<p>Cllr Roger Begy, Leader, Rutland rbegy@rutland.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllr Patricia Bradwell, cllrp.bradwell@lincolnshire.gov.uk Lincolnshire, supported by</p> <p>Cllr Ivan Ould, Leicestershire. ivan.ould@leics.gov.uk</p>	<p>John Sinnott, CEO Leicestershire County Council jsinnott@leics.gov.uk</p>	<p>Anthony May, Nottinghamshire County Council cfc.director@nottscc.gov.uk</p>	Complete
East of England	<p>Cllr David Brown, Cambridgeshire County Council david.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Gillian Beasley, CEO Peterborough City Council gillian.beasley@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>Jenny Coles, Director of Safeguarding and Specialist Services Hertfordshire County Council Jenny.coles@hertscc.gov.uk</p> <p>PA Vicky Daines Vicky.daines@hertscc.gov.uk</p>	Complete
London	<p>Cllr Steve Reid, Leader, Lambeth sreed@lambeth.gov.uk</p> <p>PA - MWarren@lambeth.gov.uk</p>	<p>Cheryl Coppel CEO London Borough of Havering cheryl.coppel@havering.gov.uk</p>	<p>Eleanor Schooling, Corporate Director: Children's Services Islington London Borough eleanor.schooling@islington.gov.uk</p>	Complete

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Appendix A

				and Frankie Sulke Executive Director for Children & Young People Lewisham Council frankie.sulke@lewisham.gov.uk	
North East			Barry Rowland CEO Newcastle upon Tyne City Council barry.rowland@newcastle.gov.uk	John Collings, Executive Director of Children's Services Newcastle City Council john.collings@newcastle.gov.uk	
North West		Cllr John Lamb, Trafford (Interim) john.lamb@trafford.gov.uk	Diana Terris, CEO Warrington Borough Council dterris@warrington.gov.uk	Kath O'Dwyer, Executive Director, Children and Young People Warrington Borough Council kodwyer@warrington.gov.uk	Complete
South East		Cllr Rob Stanton, Wokingham Borough Council rob.stanton@wokingham.gov.uk	Steve Beynon, Isle of Wight steve.beynon@iow.gov.uk	Dr Janette Karklins, Bracknell Forest ianette.karklins@bracknell-forest.gov.uk	Complete
South West		Cllr Toni Coombs, Dorset T.B.Coombs@dorsetcc.gov.uk	Amanda Deekes, South Gloucestershire amanda.deekes@southglos.gov.uk	Bronwen Lacey, Plymouth bronwen.lacey@plymouth.gov.uk	Complete
West Midlands		Cllr Ann Hartley, Shropshire Deputy Leader of the Council	Mark Rogers, CEO Solihull	David Taylor DCS lead for the West Midlands	Complete

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Yorkshire and Humberside	ann.hartley@shropshire.gov.uk	mrogers@solihull.gov.uk	david.taylor@shropshire.gov.uk	
	Cllr Jonathan Owen, Dep Leader, E. Riding jvg.owen@btinternet.com		Elaine McHale, Wakefield Director of children's services emchale@wakefield.gov.uk	Complete

(24.10.2011)

Autumn Statement update

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper provides a preliminary analysis of the impact on local government of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report and provide a steer on action to be taken in response to the Autumn Statement.

Action

Director of Finance and Resources

Contact officer: Stephen Jones
Position: Director of Finance and Resources
Phone no: 020 7664 3171
E-mail: stephen.jones@local.gov.uk

Autumn Statement update

Background

1. The Chancellor of the Exchequer reported to Parliament on the Autumn Statement on 29 November. The Statement contained important new announcements about public spending and revised forecasts prepared by the Office for Budget Responsibility on future levels of economic growth and tax receipts.
2. The LGA released statements both ahead of and on the day of the Autumn Statement, setting out our key messages. Our on the day briefing was made available to member authorities and Parliamentarians and is published on the www.local.gov.uk website. The Chairman commented:

"In the current spending review period councils have had their funding cut by 28 per cent, against an average cut across Whitehall of 8.3 per cent. As the most trusted and efficient part of the public sector, councils have borne the brunt of the cuts in a disciplined manner balancing the needs of the economy against maintaining vital local services.

"While the announcement of some extra capital investment in schools and local transport will be welcomed, the prospect of further reductions in funding for councils, running into hundreds of millions of pounds from 2013, risks adversely impacting those vital local services people rely on every day at a time when many communities are already feeling the strain."

3. The remainder of this report sets out more fully the analysis underlying this response and discussed the implications of the Chancellor's statement for member authorities.

Key points in the Autumn Statement

4. The Government's intention through the Autumn Statement measures is to take further action to protect the economy, build a stronger economy in the future and do so in a way that is fair. The fundamental changes as compared with the position set out in the 2010 Spending Review are:
 - 4.1 a switch of about £3.7 billion over the period to 2014-15 from current spending into capital spending; and
 - 4.2 further cuts in current spending in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

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5. About half the current spending cuts needed to fund the additional capital spending come from changes to working and child tax credits. The remainder comes from adjusting the overseas aid budget in line with lower forecast GDP and from a saving taken from public sector pay restraint.
6. The rationale for the saving from public sector pay restraint is that, in taking the Spending Review 2010 decisions it appears that the Treasury assumed that public sector pay awards would increase at around 2% p.a. after the previously announced pay freeze periods ended. The Government has now stated its intention to set public sector pay awards at an average of 1% for each of the two years after the current pay freeze comes to an end (2013-14 and 2014-15 for most of central Government). The Government has said that 'Departmental budgets will be adjusted in line with this policy, with the exception of the health and schools budgets, where the money saved will be recycled'. It is our understanding that the CLG local government budget will be subject to this adjustment in 2013-14 and 2014-15, although we do not yet have any clear information about the amounts involved.
7. The additional capital spending funded from these savings includes the following areas of particular interest to local government:
 - 7.1 significant road and rail infrastructure improvements in various parts of the country, and £170 million extra for local transport projects;
 - 7.2 an extra £1 billion for the Regional Growth Fund;
 - 7.3 an extra £600 million to support local authority capital investment in schools, said to be enough to deliver an additional 40,000 school places; and
 - 7.4 a stated intention to allow local authorities more flexibility to support major infrastructure.
8. The Chancellor's announcement of his outline spending plans for 2015-16 and 2016-17 states that total Government expenditure will continue to fall by 0.9% p.a. in real terms in each of those years, which is the same rate as in Spending Review 2010. Within this, capital spending will grow in line with general inflation.

What this means for local government

9. The Government has not yet set out in detail what these changes mean for local government. Officers' assessment is that we are unlikely to see material overall change in the 2012-13 Formula Grant Settlement as a result. On the capital side, it appears that a significant part of the extra schools funding will be made available in 2012-13, but the new local transport and Regional Growth Fund money is significantly skewed towards 2013-14 and 2014-15.

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10. For 2013-14 and 2014-15, though, it appears that the Government's intention is to reduce the current spending control totals already set for local government, in line with the newly announced pay policy. The Government is not seeking to change the way pay awards are determined in local government – that remains the responsibility of employers. It is, rather, removing funding on the assumption that events will prove the Treasury's original funding level to have been over-generous. Given that the 2010 Spending Review settlement cut local government funding so severely, and that our sector has borne the majority of public sector redundancies (with their associated costs), we are concerned that the additional cuts risk impacting front line services.
11. The implications of the Chancellor's announcement for 2015-16 and 2016-17 are, though, of even greater significance. A cut of 0.9% real in total Government spending might not sound very much but, once the impact of uprating of spending on pensions and benefits is taken into account, what is left to fund grants for departments' and local government's spending will fall in cash terms. At worst, this could translate, in the currency of the Local Government Resource Review, into higher and higher levels of the 'set-aside' that was highlighted as a significant issue in the LGA response to the recent consultation. Our position on this is completely different: we want access to the full real terms growth in business rates.
12. A further update on these matters will be provided orally at the meeting.

Recommendation

13. Members are recommended to note this report and provide a steer on action to be taken in response to the Autumn Statement.

Item 6

LGA Membership Subscriptions

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper reports on the proposed LGA membership subscription structure for the year commencing on 1 April 2012, and provides an analysis of the impact of reductions in the subscription level over recent years.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report.

Action

Director of Finance and Resources

Contact officer: Stephen Jones
Position: Director of Finance and Resources
Phone no: 020 7664 3171
E-mail: stephen.jones@local.gov.uk

LGA Membership Subscriptions

Background

1. The LGA Leadership Board has the responsibility for setting the level of membership subscriptions, based on recommendations from the Resources Panel. The purpose of this report is to provide an update for members of the LGA Executive.
2. The current overall strategy is one of progressive reductions in the subscription level, amounting to around 20% over the period 2010-11 to 2013-14. In the first year for which this strategy applies, 2011-12, an overall subscription reduction on 2010-11 of almost 13% was delivered. Following discussion at the Resources Panel, a further reduction of more than 7% is now proposed for 2012-13, enabling the target reduction to be met one year early.
3. The proposed subscription structure for 2012-13 is set out in **Appendix A**, attached to this report. This will be presented to the LGA Leadership Board meeting on 7 December. At the proposed new subscription levels, membership subscription income will amount to £10.045 million for 2012-13 compared with £10.886 million for 2011-12.
4. These reductions follow the major reform of the subscription structure introduced for 2010-11, in which subscriptions overall were also significantly reduced.
5. The main changes for 2012-13 are that:
 - 5.1 basic subscription levels have been reduced;
 - 5.2 the discount allowed to Metropolitan Districts, London Boroughs and the City Corporation has been increased in line with inflation;
 - 5.3 a new discount has been authorised for non-metropolitan unitary authorities that were formed out of Districts that, before 1997, were members of the Association of District Councils: this change complements the new arrangement for the support of the District Councils Network and has been funded from monies received on the liquidation of A.D.C Trustees Ltd; and
 - 5.4 the subscription structure for Fire and Rescue authorities has been simplified, and subscriptions reduced.

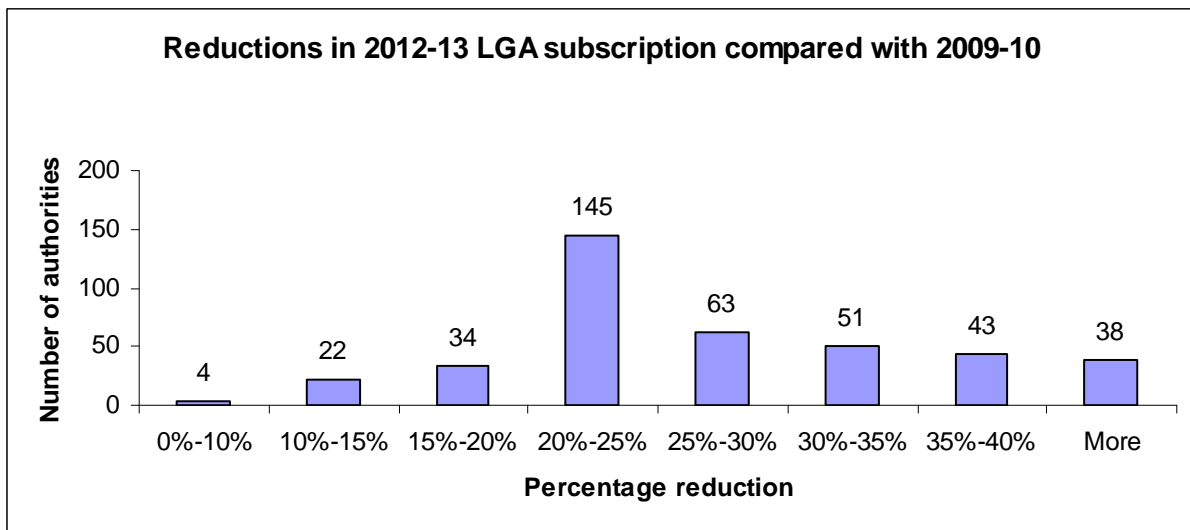
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Immediate impact of subscription reductions

- 6. Looking at 2012-13 subscriptions compared with those for 2011-12, and assuming that all authorities continue to avail themselves of the prompt payment discount, subscription income will reduce by around 7.7% overall.
- 7. Subscription reductions are relatively evenly distributed. 46 authorities will see a reduction of up to 5%. The majority, consisting of 295 authorities, will see a reduction of between 5% and 10%. A further 60 authorities will see their subscriptions reducing by more than 10%.

Longer term impact of subscription reductions

- 8. It is worth looking at the cumulative impact of subscription reductions since 2009-10. Over this period, reductions are in general much larger. The median level of reduction, comparing 2012-13 with 2009-10, is 24.6%. This reflects a distribution between authorities as shown in the Table below.



- 9. It can be seen from this Table that all but a handful of authorities have benefited very substantially from subscription reductions, and the overwhelming majority have seen their subscriptions reduce by more than 20% in cash terms. Taking into account actual and forecast inflation as measured by the RPI, a 20% cash terms reduction is likely to be equivalent to one of almost 30% in real terms over the period 2009-10 to 2012-13.
- 10. A minority of authorities have received smaller subscription reductions. This is largely the result of the major reforms to the subscription structure in 2010-11. Although the reforms delivered subscription reductions for everyone, it was not possible both to simplify the structure and deliver consistently large reductions.

Item 6

11. In considering the impact of the subscription reforms, members of the Resources Panel were interested in how much the subscription was per resident, and whether this figure was the same across authorities. The answer is that the 2012-13 subscription will average out at around 20p per resident in England, and around 8p per resident in Wales. Taking into account differing local authority structures in different parts of the country, there is relatively little variation in this figure across England.
12. This outcome can be compared with the level of financial benefits that the LGA regularly delivers for its member authorities. In most years, direct financial benefits run well into the hundreds of millions of pounds. For example, our success in the Icelandic banks work is worth around £470 million across the group of affected authorities. Each £100 million of additional benefit represents an extra £1.85 for each person in England and Wales. It is therefore the case that, leaving aside the wide range of non-financial benefits, the direct financial benefits of LGA membership cover the subscription many times over.

Membership

13. In the course of this year, Torridge District Council, King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and North Somerset Council have returned to LGA membership. This will increase subscription income by around £60,000 for next year.
14. Against that, nineteen authorities are currently on notice to leave. If every authority exercised its notice, the loss of income would be just over £600,000. However, on the basis of contact with authorities on notice, officers' present view is that the risk of loss of membership income amounts to no more than £300,000. Work is ongoing to encourage all these authorities to withdraw or roll over their notice.

Recommendation

15. Members are recommended to note this report.

Financial implications

16. At the proposed subscription levels, membership subscription income will amount to £10.045 million for 2012-13 compared with £10.886 million for 2011-12. Both these figures are net of all applicable discounts. The Resources Panel regard this as a sustainable level of income for the future and consider the potential loss of membership income from future withdrawals to be a manageable risk.

Recommended LGA Subscriptions for 2012-13

Type of authority	Subscription
Shire District	A basic subscription of £11,000, subject to a discount of £100 for every 1,000 population below 105,000
Single Tier and County Councils	A basic subscription of £82,000, subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a supplement of £80 for every 1,000 population above 400,000 • a discount of £200 for every 1,000 population below 400,000 • an additional discount of £37,000 for smaller counties in two-tier areas – withdrawn at £250 per 1,000 population above 850,000 • a maximum subscription of £112,500 • a normal minimum subscription of £22,000; but • in the cases of the Isles of Scilly and Rutland County Council, subscriptions calculated so as to give an average per resident equal to that for other non-metropolitan unitary authorities.
Welsh LGA	A corporate subscription of 40% the average per resident subscription for non-metropolitan unitary authorities calculated as above, multiplied by the population of Wales.
Non-metropolitan unitary Councils	An additional discount of 1.5% of the subscription calculated as above and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing transitional protection for two non-metropolitan unitary authorities that would otherwise pay higher subscriptions than in 2011–12, covering the additional amount that would otherwise be payable in the absence of the new 1.5% discount
Metropolitan District Councils, London Boroughs and the City Corporation	An increase in the financing discount from £6,700 to £7,965
Fire and Rescue authorities	A basic subscription of £9,950 subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a supplement of £3.00 for every 1,000 population over 1 million • a discount of £7.25 for every 1,000 population below 1 million
Police authorities	A flat rate subscription at the same level as the basic subscription for Shire Districts
Transport authorities	A flat rate subscription of £30,500
National Park authorities	Flat rate subscriptions of between £239 and £2,006
Town and Parish councils	A flat rate subscription of 20% of the basic subscription for a Shire District
All authorities	A prompt payment discount of 2.5% on subscriptions paid on or before 30 June 2012

References to populations are to Office of National Statistics 2010 Mid Year Estimates.

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	LGA Executive
Date and time:	Thursday 10 November 2011, 2.15pm
Venue:	The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1 Transport and Localism

Cllr Peter Box CBE introduced this item to the Executive outlining the Economy and Transport Programme Board's proposed work on transport policy. Cllr Box introduced Cllr Mark Dowd CBE, Chair of the Special Interest Group of Integrated Transport Authorities (ITA SIG) and Neil Scales, Chief Executive and Director General of Mersey Travel, who described how greater localisation of decision making in transport could help contribute to national economic growth as well as outlining the work of the ITA SIG.

Members felt that real integration of transport services, across all aspects of transport, including roads, freight and rail as well as buses was needed to have a beneficial effect on economic growth and development. Members discussed the limitations of quality bus contracting in producing an integrated transport service as well as making it difficult to create new bus routes. Cllr Box stated that the Government was aware of the issue of integration. Neil Scales commented that the Government was currently consulting on the possibility of area quality contracts.

The possibility of creating new Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs) was discussed, especially with regard to the Local Enterprise Zones. It was noted that new ITAs would be a matter for local determination.

Decision

Members agreed the principles of greater devolution and localisation of transport policy and the importance of making a distinct offer to Government.

Action

Officers to progress as directed by the LGA Executive.

**Ian
Hughes**

2 Community Budgets

Paul Raynes introduced this paper, and set out the key principles for the LGA's continuing work in this area. These are:

- LGA members and officers should continue to participate in policy and governance discussions with the Government in order to drive the initiative in the direction the sector is demanding;
- The LGA should continue to offer direct support to councils participating in community budgets for troubled families and to the councils piloting "whole place" and neighbourhood community budgets; and
- The LGA should support councils not yet participating by facilitating information exchange, and in particular help to ensure that what the small number of "whole place" pilots learn is available to as many other interested councils as possible.

Some members raised concerns about the level of support for Community Budgets in Government departments and felt that there should have been a greater number of pilots. The Chairman said that Community Budgets were one of the key priorities of the Prime Minister, and had been gaining support within Government departments. This was a completely different way of working and it would take time for the barriers to break down. However, this was an important opportunity for the LGA and local government. The Chairman also stated that the LGA had been lobbying for a greater number of pilots and would continue to push for this with the Government.

Decision

*Members **agreed** the three key principles and importance of a greater number of pilots in the future.*

Action

Officers to:

1. develop appropriate working arrangements to support councils and work with the Government across all the main strands of work emerging from the community budgets initiative;
2. support councils which are pursuing the community budgets model out with the frameworks endorsed by the Government;
3. continue to lobby for further pilots in the future.

**Paul
Raynes**

3 Local Growth Campaign – supporting councils’ ambition for local economic growth

Cllr Peter Box CBE introduced this item for discussion setting out Economy and Transport Programme Board’s previous work in this area and the need to develop a programme for what could be done, which would stretch the LGA’s ambition for localism and which recognises the economic challenges facing different places.

Members asked how developers would be involved in this work. Cllr Box said that developers would be heavily involved in the Town Hall meetings taking place in the coming months. The Board had sought a wide variety of attendees to ensure that the proposals which would be contained in the Economy and Transport Programme Board’s Green Paper reflected a broad number of views.

Members felt that the localisation of business rates would impact on this work and needed to be considered in its planning.

Decision

The Executive endorsed the proposals for future working as set out in the report.

Action

The Economy and Transport Programme Board to consider the Executive’s comments in its work programme.

**Ian
Hughes**

4 Icelandic Banks Update

Stephen Jones, Director of Finance and Resources, introduced this item to the group, updating them on the work that had been undertaken to secure local authorities deposits from Icelandic banks and gain priority status. Stephen outlined the continuing work of the LGA to secure a favourable exchange rate for the deposits and he particularly thanked the finance team and the councils that had worked with the LGA to achieve this outcome.

Members agreed that the work had proved the value and effectiveness of the LGA and thanked Stephen Jones and the rest of the finance team for their hard work and support.

Decision

*Members **endorsed** the provision of continuing support for authorities on the basis set out in the report.*

Action

Officers to proceed in line with members’ comments.

**Stephen
Jones**

5 Note of the LGA Leadership Board 9 November 2011

Members **agreed** the note of the last LGA Leadership Board meeting.

6 Note of last LGA Executive

Members **agreed** the note of the last LGA Executive meeting.

Attendance list

Position/ Role

Chairman
Vice-chairman
Vice-chairman
Vice-chairman
Vice-chairman
Deputy-chairman
Deputy-chairman
Deputy-chairman
Deputy-chairman
Deputy-chairman

Councillor

Sir Merrick Cockell
Gary Porter
Marianne Overton
Gerald Vernon-Jackson
David Sparks OBE
Robert Light
Robert Gordon DL
Sharon Taylor
Steve Reed
Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE

Authority

RB Kensington & Chelsea
South Holland DC
Lincolnshire CC
Portsmouth City
Dudley MBC
Kirklees Council
Hertfordshire CC
Stevenage BC
Lambeth LB
Watford BC

Position/ Role

Members

Councillor

David Parsons CBE
Paul Bettison
Peter Fleming
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock
Peter Box CBE
Mehboob Khan
David Rogers OBE
Chris White
Jill Shortland OBE
Peter Martin
Martin Hill OBE
Mayor Jules Pipe
Paul Watson
Robert Dutton OBE
Stephen Castle
Neil Clarke
Stephen Houghton CBE
Paul Carter
Ian Greenwood
Sir Richard Leese CBE

Authority

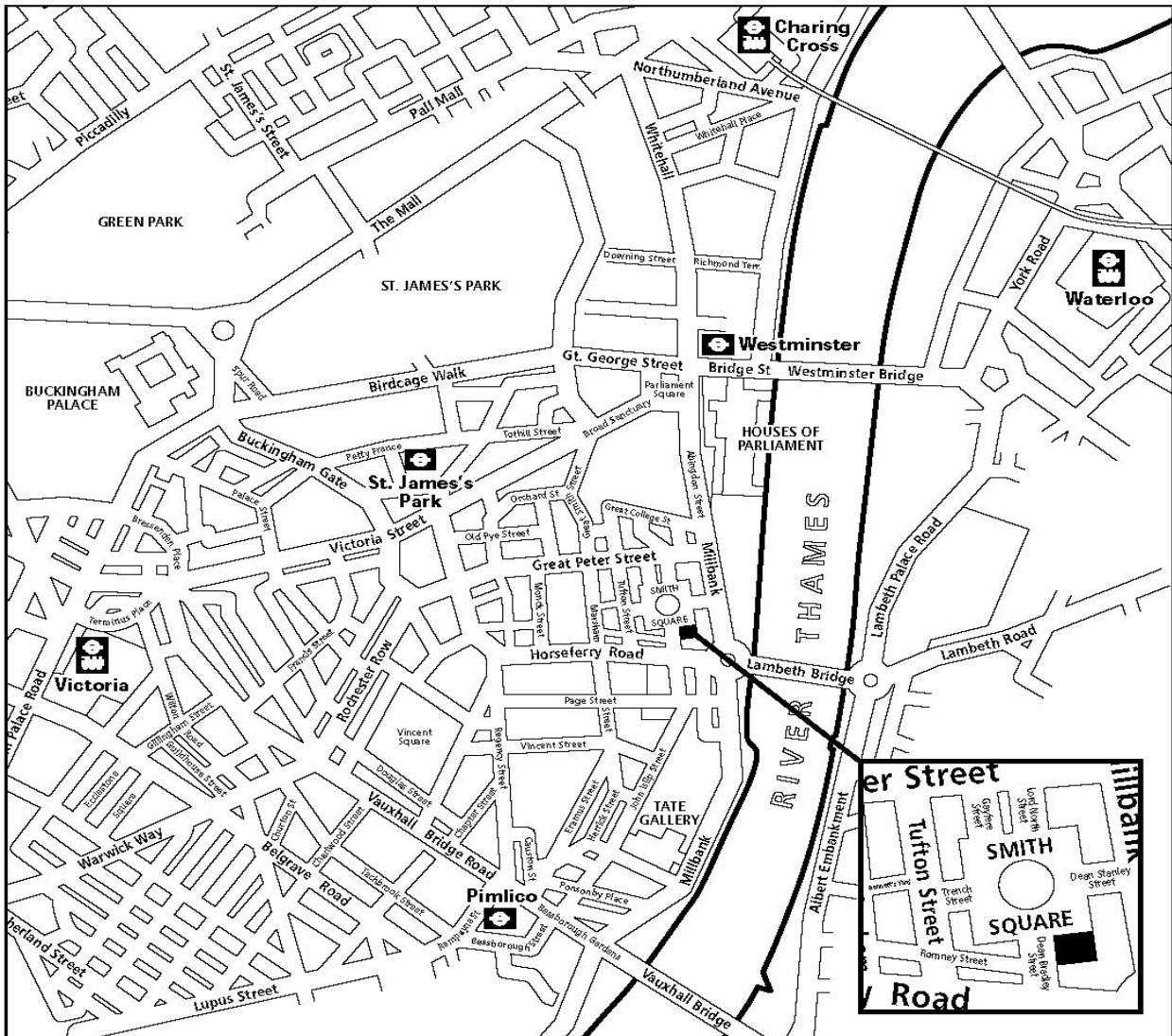
Leicestershire CC
Bracknell Forest Council
Sevenoaks DC
Lewisham LB
Wakefield Council
Kirklees Council
East Sussex CC
Hertfordshire CC
Somerset CC
Essex CC
Lincolnshire CC
Hackney LB
Sunderland City
Wrexham County Borough
Essex CC
Rushcliffe DC
Barnsley MBC
Kent CC
Bradford MDC
Manchester City

Apologies

Philip Atkins
Roger Phillips
Edward Lord OBE JP
Lord Peter Smith
David Simmonds
David Wilcox OBE
Angus Campbell
Andrew Lewer

Staffordshire CC
Herefordshire CC
Local Partnerships
LG Leadership
Hillingdon LB
Derbyshire CC
Dorset CC
Derbyshire CC

LGA Location Map



Local Government Association

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Email: info@local.gov.uk
Website: www.local.gov.uk

Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are;

Victoria

and **Waterloo**; the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (District and Circle Lines); **Westminster** (District, Circle and Jubilee Lines); and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line), all about 10 minutes walk away. Buses **3** and **87** travel along **Millbank**, and the **507** between Victoria and Waterloo goes close by at the end of **Dean Bradley Street**.

Bus routes - Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych **N87**
3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

Bus routes - Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria
C10 Elephant and Castle - Pimlico - Victoria
88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

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Cycle racks are available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

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Local Government House is located within the congestion charging zone. For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car Parks

Abingdon Street Car Park
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Horseferry Road/Arneway Street