

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LGA Executive
Date and time: Thursday 12 July 2012, 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. Community Budgets Update

The Chairman updated members on work undertaken by the LGA since the last Executive meeting to support the four whole-place Community Budgets pilots. Members raised concerns about the varying levels of engagement across Government departments on community budgets.

Members agreed that further work would be done to share learning from the pilots with the rest of the sector.

Decision

Members noted the update.

Action

LGA Officers to continue to provide updates to the LGA Executive.

2. NCB Concordat

Cllr David Rogers OBE, Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board, set out the benefits of the Compact saying it would help Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) to drive reform locally. Noted that the CWB Board was continuing to work with the Department of Health (DH) on the Compact to ensure that the sector's concerns were appropriately reflected.

Members agreed that this was an opportunity for local government but raised a number of concerns including:

- How the role of scrutiny would work with HWBs. Cllr Rogers confirmed that scrutiny committees would have the power to scrutinise HWBs and their spending.

- To what extent the localist proposals would be. Cllr Rogers stated that the Compact would give local government greater safeguards and influence in their work.
- Whether the LGA had processes in place to deal with the reforms. Cllr Rogers said that the LGA had been working with the DH to put in place mechanisms to support councils with the changes to public health.
- If there were any logistical barriers to sharing data between areas. Cllr Rogers said that this should be picked up by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Decision

Members agreed the proposals to:

- *put in place effective mechanisms for Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to ensure that CCG plans adhere to the joint health and wellbeing strategy, and where possible are jointly commissioned;*
- *ensure that the NHS Commissioning Board assurance process for CCGs includes a clear plan for the deployment and reinvestment of local resources and alignment with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS);*
- *facilitate and promote shared system learning and leadership at all levels in the system, and provide a package of support;*
- *work together on safeguarding, emergency planning and joining up separate outcomes frameworks;*
- *align sector-led improvement with the NHS Institute for Innovation; and*
- *put in place an early warning system to identify areas that may need support.*

Action

Officers to implement the agreed actions.

**Sandie
Dunne**

3. Children's Improvement Board Report

Cllr David Simmonds, Chairman of the Children and Young People Board, highlighted the importance of sector-led improvement for Children's Services. The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) had made good progress in the past year, but there was still further work to be done with services varying throughout the country. The CIB was working to emphasise the importance of high quality political commitment to improving services as well as strong support from officers.

Colin Hilton, Director of Children's Services Self-Improvement for the Children's Improvement Board, said this work was part of a wider sector-led approach to improvement and that the new inspection regime was a key challenge for this approach.

Members raised the issue of children's homes often being outside local authority control and Cllr Simmonds responded that this had been raised with Government and needed to be looked at as part of the entire system in placements for children.

Decision

Members noted the progress of the Children's Improvement Board in the past year.

Action

Officers to report back to the next CIB meeting on the outcome of the Executive discussion.

**Colin
Hilton**

4. Public Health Funding to Local Government

Cllr David Rogers introduced this item saying that DH had now released the baseline funding figures. This showed a wide variation across the country in funding for public health. The proposed formula would be based on the standardised mortality rate. Final funding allocations had yet to be released, although the LGA is lobbying Government to release them as soon as possible to enable councils to plan services effectively.

Members discussed the need for further work on the evidence base for the proposals in the report and the likely underfunding of public health in some areas. Cllr Rogers told members that the LGA were working on a financial assessment of the proposals.

Members agreed that the return of public health to local government, was a positive development for the sector and thanked the officers for the work done so far.

Decision

Members agreed that a further report should come to the Executive once further details around the funding allocations were released.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed.

**Sandie
Dunne**

5. Adult Social Care White paper

Cllr Rogers told members that there was still a significant funding gap for councils in the white paper proposals. Members agreed that funding of adult social care, and the wide-ranging impact on other services if this is not addressed, remains the critical issue.

Decision

Members agreed to continue lobbying on the issue of financing adult social care on a cross party basis.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed.

**Sandie
Dunne**

6. Independent Review of Members' Allowances

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, introduced this item

Declarations of interest were made by Cllrs Sir Merrick Cockell, Gary Porter, David Sparks OBE, Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Marianne Overton and Paul Bettison

Sir Merrick Cockell left the room for the discussion on chairman's remuneration. Gary Porter and Gerald Vernon-Jackson left the room for the discussion on Vice chairs' remuneration.

Decision

Members agreed the amended recommendations:

- *That the SRA for the Lead and Regional Peers should be based on a day rate of £300, which the Panel felt provided good value for money.*
- *That the four Groups should have the flexibility to allocate their total days to meet the particular needs of the Group, but that the Chief Executive should be asked to review total allocations quarterly.*
- *That the LGA should review the allocation of days across the four groups annually and whether to reflect the political proportionality of the LGA.*
- *That the SRAs for the Chairman and Group Leaders were reasonable and should continue to be linked to staff negotiated increases.*
- *That, given the demands of the role, there was a case for the Chairman's days to increase from 3.5 to 4.5 per week if they had the time available. In that case the SRA should be increased pro-rata from £54,482 to £70,048.*
- *If the LGA wished to proceed on this basis, and if the individual elected for 4.5 days per week, then the Independent Panel should be convened annually to scrutinise the chairman's ability to fulfil the higher commitment.*
- *That the Vice Chairmen (but not the Chairman) should be allowed to undertake additional paid peer work to a maximum of*

10 days per year.

- *That where a member received payment for peer work alongside an SRA both should be presented together on the LGA website.*
- *That the Vice Chairmen should take no part in the allocation of work to themselves.*
- *That the SRA for the new Finance Panel should reflect the SRA paid to members of the Resources Panel.*
- *That the four members of the Audit Committee should be paid a day rate of £300 a day, for a maximum of three meetings per annum.*

Action

Officers to amend the LGA Scheme of members' Allowance in accordance with the decision.

**Claire
Holloway**

7. Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP attended the Executive meeting to answer questions on a range of major issues for local government.

Localisation of business rates

Whilst members broadly welcomed the proposals for the localisation of business rates, they raised concerns about the restrictions imposed by Government. In particular:-

- The decision to allow councils to retain only 50% and how to increase that figure.
- That the proposals in their current form could act as a disincentive to growing business rate revenue.
- The 7 year reset period

The Minister set out the Government's position, arguing the need for re-distribution to ensure that all local authorities had a level of protection. He said that the reset period was set at 7 years to allow time for the new system to become fully embedded. The Minister invited members to contact him to discuss the localisation of business rates with him further.

Localisation of council tax benefit

Sir Merrick Cockell emphasised the cross party support for the localisation of council tax benefit. However members raised a number of concerns, in particular

- The decision not to give councils the flexibility to change discounts for pensioners and single people.
- The impact on the most vulnerable of that combined with the 10%

funding cut.

- The risk that the proposals created a disincentive to work.
- Potential issues with the IT system needed to implement the new system.

The Minister responded that the deficit had to be reduced and that a reduction in funding was necessary. He maintained that councils could design schemes not to create a disincentive.

Housing

Members emphasised the importance of building new affordable housing and raised strong concerns about the limits on borrowing to finance new housing.

The Minister maintained that this was necessary in the context of the need to reduce public sector borrowing and insisted that there was no evidence of rents going up. His comments were refuted by several members who pointed to the 7% rise in council housing rents the previous year.

Other issues

Cllr Williams highlighted the current rules which prevented Southampton Council from holding a combined “preferendum” and awareness-raising of the PCC elections.

Cllr Jules Pipe drew attention to the requirement to publish public notices in the local paper, at considerable cost in urban areas, despite falling readerships and the exponential growth of digital media.

The Minister undertook to look into both issues.

8. Note of the LGA Leadership Board

Decision

Members agreed the note of the last LGA Leadership Board meeting held on 11 July 2012.

9. Note of last LGA Executive

Decision

Members agreed the note of the last LGA Executive meeting held 14 June 2012.

Attendance list

Position/ Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Sir Merrick Cockell	RB Kensington & Chelsea
Vice-chairman	Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Vice-chairman	David Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC
Vice-chairman	Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City
Vice-chairman	Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Robert Light	Kirklees Council
Deputy-chairman	Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Steve Reed	Lambeth LB

Position/ Role	Councillor	Authority
Members	Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Council
	Flick Rea	Camden LB
	Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
	David Rogers OBE	East Sussex CC
	Stephen Castle	Essex CC
	Peter Martin MBE	Essex CC
	Mayor Jules Pipe	Hackney LB
	Roger Phillips	Herefordshire CC
	Chris White	Hertfordshire CC
	Robert Gordon DL	Hertfordshire CC
	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
	Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
	Edward Lord OBE JP	Local Partnerships
	Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
	Philip Atkins	Staffordshire CC
	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
Robert Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough	

Position/ Role	Councillor	Authority
Substitutes	John Merry CBE	Salford City
	Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow
	Simon Henig	Durham CC
	Richard Williams	Southampton City

Councillor

Stephen Houghton CBE
Angus Campbell
Mehboob Khan
Robert Light
Steve Reed
Keith Wakefield
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock
Sir Richard Leese CBE
Paul Watson
Peter Box CBE
Lord Peter Smith

Authority

Barnsley MBC
Dorset CC
Kirklees Council
Kirklees Council
Lambeth LB
Leeds City
Lewisham LB
Manchester City
Sunderland City
Wakefield Council
Wigan MBC