

## Note of the last Executive meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	LGA Executive
<b>Date and time:</b>	Thursday 14 March 2013
<b>Venue:</b>	The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1.	<p><b>Spending review submission to the Treasury</b></p> <p>Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE (Chair of the Finance Panel) introduced the report which included a copy of the LGA's key lobbying asks to the Treasury for the 2015/16 spending round. She thanked the Finance Panel, LGA officers and all those elected members that had contributed to the development of the submission, which had been submitted on 12 March in order to influence Government in advance of the 2013 Budget announcement. The Executive were invited to comment on the LGA's key messages to be made to Ministers in the follow up meetings and any points to be developed further in the more detailed submission to be made to the Treasury in late Spring.</p> <p>In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members endorsed the submission to the Treasury and the key policy lines within it, as well as highlighting the importance of promoting this lobbying work throughout the sector.</li><li>• The importance of at least maintaining NHS investment in social care was made clear as well as the need for a more holistic approach to health and social care funding and the system as a whole.</li><li>• It was noted that whilst the average cut to local government funding in 2014/15 was 2 per cent, this figure was higher for some local authorities such as those in the North East.</li><li>• With reference to the significant efficiency saving already achieved by the sector and the increasing financial pressures, Members emphasised the need to convey to Government the message that the current direction of travel was unsustainable without impacting on services.</li><li>• Although supportive of the LGA's position that the centrally set Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap should be removed, the difficulty of persuading the Treasury was noted and 'the ability to transfer local authority underspend within the sector' was proposed as a contingency option.</li></ul>	

**Decision**

That the Executive **noted** the submission and **asked** that their comments inform the development of a more detailed submission to the Treasury in late Spring.

**Action**

LGA Officers to proceed as directed.

Nicola  
Morton

**2. Welfare Reform: The role of Councils in Universal Credit**

Cllr Taylor introduced the report which followed on from the Executive's discussion at its last meeting on the draft framework for how the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and councils might work together after the introduction of Universal Credit. Cllr Taylor summarised the initial feedback the LGA had received so far, and asked for the Executive's views, to inform the LGA's response to DWP's consultation on the framework. She updated members on the work of the Face to Face pilots and encouraged local authorities to submit individual responses to the consultation.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Members reiterated concerns about the logistical aspects of the scheme which remained unclear. These included: the transfer of local authority staff; the timescale for implementation and phased approach; clarity around who would be banker of last resort; and sufficient capacity to support clients' whose circumstances regularly change.
- In terms of funding, Members expressed opposition to the proposal that local funding sit with DWP District Managers and highlighted the need for assurances that funding for Universal Credit would not be top sliced from other local government funding streams.
- With reference to the importance of sharing the learning from the Face to Face pilots within the sector as early as possible, it was noted that the LGA were contesting DWP's decision to postpone the publication of the results for 3 months after the completion of the pilots.
- Members expressed serious concerns about the Government's assumptions on levels of digital access to services and questioned what steps would be taken to support hard to reach groups. Given the role of Libraries in providing IT facilities for accessing Universal Credit, it was suggested that further funding in this area could help increase uptake of the self-service system.

**Decision**

That the Executive:

- i. **noted** the feedback so far on the Local Support Services Framework and **asked** that their views inform the LGA's response to the Department for Work and Pensions consultation;

- ii. **endorsed** the LGA's approach for taking forward the work with Department for Work and Pensions on the Local Support Services Framework; and
- iii. **noted** the progress made by the LA Face to Face pilots.

**Action**

LGA Officers to proceed as directed.

Paul  
Raynes

**3. The Danish System – Reflections for English local government**

Cllr Marianne Overton introduced the report, which had been commissioned by the Leadership Board. The discussion paper explored lessons from the Danish system of local government to inform the LGA's work on the future direction of local government in England.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Members highlighted Denmark as a positive example of cross party working across all levels of government. Although differences in culture and electoral voting systems were discussed as potential challenges to such a consensual approach being adopted in Westminster, Members commended the success of cross-party working across the LGA.
- In discussing the value of international comparison on how devolved local government functions work in other countries, Members emphasised the importance of gathering empirical evidence to support the LGA's lobbying. Suggestions for future consideration included: comparison with nations such as France and Germany, as well as looking at the work of Professor Michael Parkinson (European Institute for Urban Affairs at Liverpool John Moores University) on the role of devolution in driving economic development.

**Decisions**

The Executive **noted** the report and **asked** that their comments inform future work to integrate learning from other local government systems to enhance the work of the LGA.

**Action**

LGA Officers to proceed as directed.

Daniel  
Goodwin

#### **4. Proportionate Regulation**

Cllr Mehboob Khan (Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board) introduced the report which explored opportunities to reposition the role of councils in regulation of local businesses. Cllr Khan noted the intention to work with a group of businesses to take this work forward and highlighted that recent feedback from business indicated that their key concerns were around the need for a consistent approach to local regulation, rather than relating to the number of regulations. Members were invited to comment on the proposed approach and to suggest additional areas for further exploration.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Members welcomed the opportunity to streamline the regulatory landscape and suggested that the dialogue be broadened to include other public regulatory bodies, such as national regulators.
- Members endorsed the suggestion that a progress report be brought to a future Executive and/or Councillor's Forum meeting, along with representatives from the business community.
- A number of concerns were expressed regarding the phrasing of paragraph 13 and 14 of the report, particularly relating to regulation of gambling licensing, and the clustering of betting shops. Members were united in their view that protecting communities should be the driving force at the heart of councils' role in regulation and stressed that it was important not to weaken current licensing regimes or the role of regulation in driving improvements.

#### **Decisions**

That the Executive:

- i. **noted** the report;
- ii. **asked** that their comments on the planned approach inform the development of the work stream; and
- iii. **requested** that the LGA Executive and/or Councillor's Forum receive an update on the work stream as it progresses, with representatives from the business community in attendance.

#### **Actions**

Members' comments to inform the development of the work stream.

Helen Murray

A progress report to be brought to a future Executive and/or Councillor Forum meeting, with representatives from the business community in attendance.

## 5. **Broadband and Economic Growth**

Cllr Andrew Lewer (Deputy Lewer Chair of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board) introduced the report which updated members on the role of councils in the rollout of the nation's broadband programme and the key issues for them to consider. Drawing on his experience at Derbyshire County Council, he highlighted a number of challenges which had been overcome and welcomed the confirmation that councils would be eligible to apply for European Regional Development Funding to support their broadband rollout.

Robert Sullivan, Chief Executive of Broadband Delivery UK (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) outlined the Government's programme to achieve a transformation in broadband in the UK by 2015. He updated on the progress of the three streams of the programme – rural, urban; and Mobile Infrastructure Projects - and highlighted the key issues for councils. He paid tribute to councils' commitment to making a success of superfast broadband rollout.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, which were responded to by Robert Sullivan, including:

- Members noted the significant potential of broadband as an enabler of growth and welcomed the increased flexibility within some aspects of the rollout.
- Members expressed a number of concerns with the rollout - in particular frustration at the difficulty of achieving value for money given that BT was the only active supplier in the rural programme. They raised concerns that councils and the planning system were being blamed by BT for delays to the rollout of superfast broadband generally. Robert Sullivan responded that BDUK was confident that the provisions set out in the broadband framework and call-off contracts should enable value for money to be delivered through the projects. The LGA Chairman requested that Members' concerns and councils' commitment to finding a solution based on sensible cooperation between councils and BT be fed back to Ministers.
- Cllr Flick Rea (Chair of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board) invited Members to send any other feedback to the CTS Board for it to take forward.

### **Decisions**

That the Executive **noted** the issues in the report and **asked** that their comments be reported back to Ministers.

### **Action**

LGA officer to progress in line with Members' direction.

Laura Caton

**6. LGA Business Plan 2013-14**

In introducing the LGA's Business Plan for 2013 -14, the Chairman thanked all those who had contributed to its development.

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) confirmed that the LGA's work around the spending review would include lobbying for an equitable, needs-based approach to local government funding.

**Decision**

That the Executive **agreed** the LGA's Business Plan for 2013-14.

**7. LGA Budget 2013-14**

Cllr Stephen Castle (Chairman of the Resources Panel) moved the report and thanked Helen Platts (Head of Business Development) for her hard work. On behalf of the Resources Panel, he recommended the LGA's financial strategy for the next two years, and the 2013 -14 budget to the Executive.

**Decision**

That the Executive **agreed** the 2013-14 budget.

**8. Note of the 13 March Leadership Board meeting**

Members **noted** the minutes of the previous meeting of the Leadership Board from Wednesday 13 March 2013.

**9. Note of last LGA Executive**

Members **noted** the minutes of the last LGA Executive meeting from Thursday 14 February 2013.

**10. Retirement of Existing LGA Executive Members**

It was noted that Cllr David Rogers OBE and Cllr Angus Campbell would be standing down at the 2013 May local elections. Both Members reflected on their experiences and achievements during their time in local government and thanked colleagues for their support over the years. The Executive put on record their gratitude to both Cllr Rogers and Cllr Campbell for their contribution to local government, and the LGA over their many years of services and wished them well in their future endeavours.

**Attendance list**

<b>Position/ Role</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Authority</b>
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	Robert Gordon CBE DL	Hertfordshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage BC
Deputy-chairman	Mehboob Khan	Kirklees Council
<b>Position/ Role</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Authority</b>
Members	Flick Rea	Camden LB
	Mike Jones	Cheshire West & Chester
	Alderman Sir David Wootton	Corporation of London
	Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
	Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Council
	Tony Jackson	East Herts DC
	Stephen Castle	Essex CC
	Mayor Jules Pipe	Hackney LB
	Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley MBC
	David Rogers OBE	East Sussex CC
	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham LB
	Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
	Philip Atkins	Staffordshire CC
	Robert Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough
	Angus Campbell	Dorset CC
	Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
	Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
<b>Position/ Role</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Authority</b>
Substitutes	John Merry CBE	Salford City
	Sue Murphy	Manchester City
	Simon Henig	Durham CC

**Apologies**

**Councillor**

Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE  
David Phillips  
Roger Phillips  
Sir Richard Leese CBE  
Chris White  
Paul Watson

**Authority**

Watford BC  
Swansea City and CC  
Herefordshire Council  
Manchester City  
Hertfordshire  
Sunderland City Council