

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Item 8

Title: LGA Leadership Board
Date and time: 13 April 2011
Venue: Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Baroness Eaton DBE	City of Bradford MDC
Vice chairman	David Shakespeare OBE	Buckinghamshire CC
Vice chairman	Richard Kemp	Liverpool City
Vice chairman	Keith Ross	West Somerset DC
Vice chairman	Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Deputy chair	Sharon Taylor	Stevenage BC
Deputy chair	Steve Reed	Lambeth LB
Deputy chair	Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City
Observer	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham LB
Apologies	David Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC
	David Parsons CBE	Leicestershire CC
	Robert Light	Kirklees Council

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
	Baroness Eaton (Chairman), on behalf of the Leadership Board, paid warm tribute to Sir Simon Milton, former Chairman of the LGA, who died this week. Cllr Sharon Taylor (Labour), Cllr Richard Kemp (Liberal Democrat) and Cllr Keith Ross (Independent) also paid tribute to Sir Simon in respect of his work on behalf of local government over a number of years. The LGA Leadership Board held a one minute silence in memory of Sir Simon.	

Decision

*The Leadership Board **agreed** to consider how the LGA might*

commemorate Sir Simon and asked for suggestions to be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

Action

Officers to prepare suggestions for commemorating Sir Simon Milton and report back to the Board.

**Claire
Holloway**

1. Building a Civil Society

At the Board's last meeting members raised the issue of the Government's "Big Society" drive and suggested that further consideration be given to an LG Group approach to a civil society.

Paul Raynes, Programme Director, made a presentation to the Board, on "How do we talk about the Big Society?" (www.local.gov.uk). Paul set out the LG Group's aims and a suggested approach for taking the work forward.

Members discussed a number of issues, including the language surrounding the concept of the "Big Society". Members comments, which were noted by officers, included:

- We need to respond to the political sensitivities over the language of Big Society whilst not to losing sight of the fact that councils and councillors have a central role to play;
- Appropriate funding by government is crucial to the success of community empowerment - councils cannot accept the responsibility without realistic funding;
- The need to engage back bench members with the new approach to service delivery;
- Councillors need appropriate development support to take forward their role in leading communities;
- The need to secure the freedom for councils to continue what they are already doing, without any new interference.
- Local government can build on what it has already learned from civic renewal and neighbourhood plans to take forward the strands of Big Society and localism;
- All parties must engage fully in how local services will be delivered;
- There must be a clear line between the role of the state and the community in building a civil society;

Decision

*The Leadership Board **agreed***

- *the broad approach set out in the presentation;*
- *that a comprehensive programme of activity be developed and brought back to the Leadership Board in due course;*

Actions

Officers to work with government on barriers to success, such as procurement rules.

**Rob Whiteman
Paul Raynes**

Officers to bring a programme of activity to the Board for approval in due course.

2. Community Budgets and payment by results.

In response to a request from the LGA Leadership Board for a full discussion, Paul Raynes, Policy Programme Director made a presentation on community budgets and payment by results (for slides see www.local.gov.uk). Paul explained how this kind of funding model links in with a commissioning structure and outlined the possible risks associated with payment by results and a suggested approach for the LG Group.

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

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **agreed** the approach set out in Paul Raynes' s presentation;
- **agreed** that arrangements be made for representatives from the 16 pilot ,to meet at an appropriate time on a cross party basis, to discuss outcomes and feed into the Baroness Hanham Review.

Action

Officers to take forward in accordance with the Leadership Board's views and the approach set out in the presentation slides.

**Rob Whiteman
Paul Raynes**

Officers to send copies of presentation slides to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander MP and Julia Goldsworthy MP, special adviser to Danny Alexander.

Paul Raynes

3. Local Government Finance Update

Stephen Jones, Group Finance Director, updated members on four important local government finance issues where there have been significant recent developments. The report sought the general direction on these issues in the absence of a LG Group Executive meeting in April.

Academies Funding Transfer

Emily Heard, Partner, Bevan Brittan LLP attended the meeting to

respond to any questions the Board might have on the legal aspects of challenging academies funding transfer.

Stephen Jones highlighted the unsatisfactory position reached on the treatment of the academies funding transfer in the 2010-2011 local government finance settlement.

Stephen informed the Board that he had sought legal advice from Bevan and Brittan, LLP. In order to seek to make an application for judicial review a pre-action letter must be sent to the Department for Communities & Local Government within the next few days.

A letter had been sent to Chief Executives of member authorities asking whether they wished to be associated with legal action and if they would be prepared to contribute towards the costs. The deadline for authorities to respond is Friday, 15 April.

Decision

- *that a pre-action letter be sent to the Department of Communities & Local Government immediately;*
- *that no further action be taken until confirmation of support for a Judicial Review, and agreement to contribute towards the costs, has been received from a sufficient number of member authorities;*
- *that any claim for application to Judicial Review should be taken forward by those authorities who have supported action.*

Action

Officers take forward in accordance with the decisions above.

Stephen Jones

LG Resources Review

Stephen Jones outlined some significant developments regarding the Local Government Resource Review. Stephen informed members that officers were drafting a consultation paper explaining the key issues in more detail which would be put to members for approval shortly.

Stephen responded to a number of comments on the reform of business rates, implications for the future of formula grant and equalisation of grant.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the local government finance update*

Action

Officers to continue to work on the consultation and provide further reports to the May and June meetings of the LG Group Executive

Stephen Jones

4. Ministry of Justice Consultation on the Potential for including the Local Government Group under Freedom of Information Legislation

Tim Allen (former Programme Director, LGA Analysis and Research) introduced the report and invited discussion and an initial steer on the LG Group approach in response to Government proposals to consider bringing the Local Government Group under Freedom of Information legislation.

Leadership Board members made a number of comments, which were noted by officers.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the report.*

Action

Officers to take forward on the basis set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

Tim Allen

5. LGA Proportionality for 2011-2012

LGA Leadership Board received a report setting out the proposed timetable for confirming changes to LGA proportionality, and agreeing the allocation of seats and distribution of chairs and vice-chairs, following the 2011 local government elections on 5 May.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **agreed** the proposed process and timetable set out in paragraphs 3 to 9 of the report.*

Action

Officers and LGA Leadership Board to take forward the timetable as set out in the report.

**Leadership Bd
Cathy Boyle**

6. General Assembly – 28 June 2011 - Outline

The Leadership Board received a report which set out the proposed format and a draft agenda for the meeting.

Cllr Richard Kemp confirmed that he would not wish to make a farewell addresses at the VIP Reception on Thursday, 30 June.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **endorsed** the proposed format and agenda.*

Action

Officers to take forward as set out in the report.

Cathy Boyle

7. Getting Closer – the next phase

Cllr Gary Porter (South Holland) and Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Portsmouth) each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item.

John Ransford, Chief Executive, introduced this report. He informed members that the process for appointing staff to the new organisation was almost complete. The final appointments panel met on 13 April and staff who had secured a role in the new organisation would receive their new contracts during week beginning 18 April. Redundancy letters to those unsuccessful in securing a role would be sent out at the same time.

John Ransford paid tribute to all staff who have gone through the difficult selection process, whilst maintaining high standards in their current roles. John also paid tribute to HR staff and managers who have carried the process through.

John emphasised that the Getting Closer project was carried out on the wishes of elected members and it was they who gave strategic direction at appropriate points from the launch of the project in January 2009 to the present time.

Baroness Eaton, Chairman, Cllrs Richard Kemp, Keith Ross and Sharon Taylor also paid tribute to the true professionalism of all

LG Group staff who have carried out their work to the highest of standards during a very difficult time.

Cllr Gary Porter asked that it be put on record that in his opinion the report did not fully meet the brief set by the LG Group Executive at its last meeting.

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **noted** the report;
- **agreed** that officers arrange a meeting between Board members and the new officer Corporate Leadership Team to discuss how they work together in the future;
- **agreed** that the Chairman write, on behalf of the Leadership Board, to all LG Group staff to show the Board's appreciation for all their work during this difficult period.

Actions

- Officers to arrange meeting between Board members and the new Corporate Leadership Team.
- Chairman to write to all LG Group Staff.

**Claire
Holloway.**

8. Note of the last LGA Leadership Board meeting

Decision

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

9. Date of the next meeting:

The next LGA Leadership Board meeting will be held on **Wednesday, 18 May 2011 at 3.00pm** in Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2.