

Meeting between SOLACE and LGA Leadership Board

Propose of report

For noting.

Summary

Derek Myers, Chair of the SOLACE Management Board has written to the LGA to seek a meeting to establish a 'refreshed understanding' between the LGA and SOLACE. SOLACE has outlined four particular areas for discussion.

Derek Myers will attend the meeting with Kathryn Rossiter, Managing Director of SOLACE.

Recommendation

Members are invited to raise any issues.

Action

As directed by LGA Leadership Board

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Background

1. SOLACE has given notice of four particular areas for discussion:
 - 1.1. A refreshed relationship between the LGA and SOLACE

SOLACE has suggested that their members, as serving chief executives and senior officers, continue to contribute to the LGA's policy making and policy analysis, and that the LGA officers are encouraged to share briefing material with relevant SOLACE members when they are in complementary discussions with Whitehall.
 - 1.2. Public education

SOLACE has suggested that there may be scope for work between the LGA communications team and SOLACE where issues in and around local government might be more widely supported if there was a more organised approach to media briefing.
 - 1.3. The importance of both political and professional management

No two councils are the same. Different preferences, personalities and working styles impact on where the contribution of elected Members and paid officers starts and finishes. SOLACE has suggested that the Chief Executive of the LGA and the Chair of SOLACE be asked to consider whether a joint panel acting as a source of advice for councils looking to adopt new political and officer management arrangements would be useful and credible.
 - 1.4. Getting on the front foot

Inevitably, local government often feels as though it is responding to initiatives and policy proposals from the Government of the day and sometimes this activity can crowd out the opportunity for the sector to do its own looking ahead and its own identification of new issues, or old challenges that seem in need of new approaches.
2. SOLACE has suggested that the LGA and senior SOLACE representatives agree to meet once a year for a stock take of both current progress and future challenges and that a pilot day be arranged between senior LGA members, appropriate LGA senior support staff and representatives of serving chief executives and senior officers to see whether time spent in trying to 'get on the front foot' yields useful benefits.