

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	LGA Leadership Board
Date and time:	9 November 2011
Venue:	Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Sir Merrick Cockell	RB of Kensington & Chelsea
Vice-chairman	David Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC
Vice-chairman	Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Vice-chairman	Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City
Vice-chairman	Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Andrew Lewer (by video conference)	Derbyshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Robert Gordon DL	Hertfordshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Robert Light	Kirklees Council
Deputy-chairman	Sharon Taylor	Stevenage BC
Deputy-chairman	Steve Reed	Lambeth LB
Deputy-chairman	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Cllr Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Andrew Lewer (Derbyshire CC), who was participating by video conference.

The Chairman informed the Board that Jo Miller, Deputy Chief Executive, would be leaving the LGA on 28 November to take up her new position as Chief Executive of Doncaster Council. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked Jo for her contribution to the work of the Association over the past two years.

1. A new approach to making intelligent interventions

Luke Blair, Interim Director of Communications, introduced a report which proposed a refined approach to communications at the LGA. Luke suggested that this approach would make the Association's communications strategy more effective and

provide a stronger, sharper and more co-ordinated focus to LGA communications generally.

Members made a number of detailed comments on the proposals set out in the paper, including

- as a political membership body, elected members must take the lead as “experts” in responding to the media as a matter of course. However, there may be occasions when a technical officer is the most appropriate “expert”. Appropriate expertise might be provided by the LGA or brokered from a council;
- the people we put forward must be good communicators in the media, and that we must ensure there are enough of these, well briefed and available at the LGA;
- the need to take a strategic overview of the ‘big’ issues coming forward, whilst recognising that events can unfold very quickly and sometimes responses cannot be planned for;
- there must be an element of trust between the political groups, particularly in relation to issues where there are different political views requiring different statements;
- the need to ensure that the new Director of Communications has the appropriate authority, trust and supporting structures to enable him/her to make judgements, without being encumbered by too much bureaucracy or too many protocols.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board

- **agreed** the approach set out in the report, subject to their comments.
- **noted** that the Director of Communications post has now been advertised.

Action

Officers to take forward as outlined in the report and in accordance with members’ comments.

Luke Blair

2. Proposals for Individual Electoral Registration

Joe Simpson, Principal Strategic Adviser, introduced a report which set out the implications for local government arising from

the proposals to introduce individual voter registration. The report summarised those proposals and highlighted the key implications. Joe informed members that whilst Government still seems unlikely to propose a full household survey in 2014, it may enhance the scale of their proposals. The Government is also reviewing its earlier recommendation about researching 'opt out'.

A supplementary report setting out the highlights from the report of the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee into Individual Electoral Registration (IER) and Electoral Administration was circulated.

The Leadership Board was asked to consider the implications for local government arising from the proposals set out in the paper. Joe Simpson responded to members' comments, on issues including: data matching and data protection, the cost of the voter registration exercise and the potential for a large reduction in the number of voters as a result of these proposals.

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **noted** the proposals set out in the report and their implications for local government;
- **asked** that their views be fed back to the Electoral Commission.

Action

Officers to feed back members' comments to the Electoral Commission. Arrangements to be taken forward for a meeting with the Commission in early 2012.

Joe Simpson

3. Fire and Rescue Authorities within the LGA

John Ransford introduced a report which informed members of the background and current issues relating to the role and place of Fire Authorities (FRAS) in the Association, to inform a forthcoming meeting between their lead members and the Chairman and Group Leaders

The Leadership discussed whether fire authorities should be able to directly elect the Chairman of the Fire Commission and Fire Services Management Committee and if so, whether this would

set a wider precedent in the Association, with regard to passenger transport authorities and national parks.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **agreed***

- *that the LGA's offer to all associate members should be reviewed;*
- *that the Board's views be relayed to representatives of FRAs at their meeting with the Chairman and Group Leaders on 17 November, and a report of that meeting brought to a future Leadership Board;*

*The Leadership Board **noted** that any changes to the current arrangements would not take effect until after the General Assembly in June 2012.*

Action

Officers to take forward in accordance with members' views.

**Claire Holloway/
Helen Murray**

4. Local Government Conference – June 2012

Jo Miller reported to members on arrangements to date for the Association's Conference in 2012.

The Board were asked to agree the following proposals

1. that the Conference should be called "LGA Annual Conference 2012".
2. that there should be three themes reflecting the priorities for local government over the coming year:
 - Growth and the Economy (Growth happens in Places – not in Whitehall)
 - The Importance of Political Leadership
 - New Models of Public Service Provision
3. that there should be 4 major plenary sessions:
 - Police and crime commissioners
 - Economic Growth
 - Adult social care and health
 - Community budgets / place and leadership

4. that the Political Group sessions should remain with their usual timings;
5. that the Wednesday fringe session should be abandoned to allow time for networking.
6. that Breakfast and evening fringe sessions should be used as commercial sponsorship opportunities;

Members discussed the possibility of inviting an international speaker to the Conference, eg. the Mayor of Chicago, subject to associated costs being covered by sponsorship.

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **agreed** the proposals set out by Jo Miller;
- **agreed** to receive further updates when appropriate.

Action

Officers to provide updates on the 2012 Conference when appropriate.

Roberta Henry

5. LGA Executive agenda for 10 November

John Ransford, Chief Executive, took the Leadership Board through the LGA Executive agenda for the following day.

6. Note of the Last Meeting

Decision

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

Next meeting: Wednesday, 7 December 2011 at 2.00pm