

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	LGA Leadership Board
Date and time:	7 December 2011 at 2.00pm
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	Robert Light by video conference	Kirklees Council
Deputy-chairman	Sharon Taylor	Stevenage BC
Deputy-chairman	Steve Reed	Lambeth LB
Deputy-chairman	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC
Apologies	Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
	Robert Gordon DL	Hertfordshire CC
Also present	Keith Mitchell CBE by video conference	Oxfordshire CC

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Cllr Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed Carolyn Downs, who took up her new role as Chief Executive on 21 November.

The Leadership Board asked that their congratulations be passed on to Councillor Andrew Lewer and his wife Gaby on the birth of their son, Francesco Philip.

1. Meeting between SOLACE and LGA

The Chairman welcomed Derek Myers, Chair of the SOLACE Management Board and Kathryn Rossiter, Managing Director of SOLACE.

SOLACE were keen to establish a 'refreshed understanding' between the LGA and SOLACE, focussing on four areas

- a refreshed relationship between the LGA and SOLACE
- public education
- the importance of both political and professional management
- getting on the front foot.

During a positive discussion, members endorsed the benefits of developing a closer working relationship between the two organisations.

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **agreed** the thrust of the recommendations and asked LGA Chief Executive, Carolyn Downs to take forward discussions with Derek Myers and bring back proposals in due course.

Action

Officers to take forward in line with members' discussion.

Carolyn Downs

2. The Sustainable Communities Act

Councillor Keith Mitchell CBE, Chairman of the Selector Panel presented this report, seeking members' views on the LGA's involvement in the Selector Panel under round two of the Act.

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

Councillor Gary Porter, on behalf of the Leadership Board, thanked Councillor Mitchell and the Selector Panel for their work under round one of the Sustainable Communities Act.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **agreed***

- *that in future the Selector Panel is extended to include a representative from Localworks;*
- *that the LGA formally communicates to Localworks the view that a statutory duty on local government to consult with local communities is unnecessary and would be counter productive.*

Action

Officers to progress in line with the Board's decisions.

Gemma Vale

3. Local Authority Bonds

Stephen Jones, Director of Finance and Resources, presented the report on behalf of Councillor Edward Lord OBE JP, who was unable to attend due to illness. The report set out the emerging conclusions of the Task & Finish Group who were commissioned to look into the potential for councils to establish a collective agency to raise funds direct, following the Public Works Loans Board decision to increase its interest rate to 1% above gilt rate.

The Leadership Board discussed the report and made number of detailed comments/asked questions on issues including:

- how a 3 AAA rating can be achieved;
- avoiding the need for cross guarantees;
- quantifying risk;
- how other types of authorities can benefit eg. Fire & Rescue Authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities;
- lending to wholly owned local authority companies;

Members stressed the need for a detailed report to the Executive in January, setting out clearly what the proposals were, what they would achieve and including a full business case and risk analysis.

Decisions

The Leadership Board

- **noted** the work to date and the key conclusions;
- **asked** that they be fully briefed ahead of the January meeting of the LGA Executive; to ensure informed decision making at that meeting.

Actions

Officers to prepare detailed business case and risk analysis in conjunction with the member task and finish group.

Mark Luntley

Officers to arrange further briefing for Leadership Board

**Mark Luntley
HGOs**

4. The Localism Act 2011

Paul Raynes, Head of Programmes, introduced the report, which summarised the LGA's wins on behalf of the sector and the support we are offering member councils on the new Act.

Members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers. In particular, Members stressed the importance of ensuring that no new burdens are placed on local government without appropriate funding.

Members discussed the revised approach to Standards contained in the Act. They agreed that, as part of its offer to member councils, the LGA should prepare a simple code of conduct which councils could adopt or amend to suit their own local circumstances but stressed that any legal implications should be checked before the Code is disseminated

Decisions

The Leadership Board

- **noted** the wins achieved by the LGA on behalf of members and the support to member councils in respect of the new legislative environment and also the issue of senior pay;
- **agreed** that the Chairman should write to all member councils informing them of the wins achieved by the LGA in this area of work;
- **agreed** that the LGA should publish a simple template Code of Conduct for member councils to use should they wish to do so;
- **asked** officers to ensure that our views are not diluted by secondary legislation.

Action

Officers to action in line with the Board's steer.

Paul Raynes

5. Disqualification for election to councils Review of section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Governance, introduced a short report outlining the scope of a high level review of the rules governing disqualification for election to councils, set out in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members acknowledged the complexity of the issue and made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers, including.

- There should be consistency in the approach to employees of all types of school;
- Rules on exclusion due to criminal conviction should be extended to include EEC convictions;
- Exclusions should be kept to a minimum encourage as wide a cross-section of people as possible to stand for election;
- Employees of an authority should not be permitted also to be a councillor at the same authority and should resign if elected.

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **asked** that a draft of their initial comments be circulated for further input

Action

Officers to feed members' comments into the review team

Claire Holloway

6. LG First

This item was deferred by the Leadership Board for a full discussion at the Board's next meeting.

Action

Officers to resubmit this item to the Board's January meeting.

Luke Blair

7. LGA Membership Subscriptions

Stephen Jones, Director of Finance and Resources, introduced a report which sought the Leadership Board's agreement to the levels of LGA membership subscriptions for the year commencing 1 April 2012.

Cllr David Sparks asked whether the LGA, via the Resources Panel, should investigate corporate memberships for sub-national grouping of councils as is done with Welsh LGA.

Decision

The Leadership Board

- **approved** the 2012/13 set out in the report;

Action

Officers to notify councils of their 2012/13 subscriptions.

**Stephen Jones
Andrea Patrick**

8. Review of Governance – roles of the LGA Leadership Board, LGA Executive and Programme Boards

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Governance, introduced a report which set out proposals for the Leadership Board to consider prior to submitting their recommendations to the LGA Executive.

Decision

*The Leadership board **agreed** to recommend to the Executive that:*

- *a new Finance Task Group be established with responsibility for Finance Policy, and for the National Fraud Framework, reporting to the LGA Executive;*
- *that the new Finance Task Group be chaired by the Chairman, Sir Merrick Cockell;*
- *that consideration be given to the establishment of a new Finance Programme Board, to replace the Finance Task Group, at an appropriate time;*
- *the roles and responsibilities of the Executive, Leadership Board and Programme Boards are amended to reflect the new integrated LGA (paragraph 3 of the report);*
- *the Programme Boards are renamed Boards.*

Action

Officers to prepare a report to the Executive reflecting the Leadership Board's discussions and conclusions.

Claire Holloway

9. National Association of Local Councils

Claire Holloway introduced a paper which briefly summarised interactions with NALC in recent years, and the LGA's associated membership scheme for larger town and parish councils.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **agreed** to invite representatives of NALC to a Board meeting in the New Year, to discuss closer working between the two organisations.*

Action

Officers to arrange for NALC representatives to attend a Leadership Board meeting

Claire Holloway

10. LGA Forward Plan

The Leadership Board were invited to consider items for future Leadership Board agendas and the critical and cross cutting issues that should be brought to the Executive and Councillors' Forum in 2012.

Action

Officers to liaise with the Heads of Group Office to agree future topics for LGA Leadership Board, LGA Executive and Councillors' Forum.

**Cathy Boyle
HGOs**

11. LGA Executive agenda for 8 December

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, took the Leadership Board through the LGA Executive agenda for the following day.

Item 3 – Children's Improvement Board

Members confirmed the importance of the work of the Children's Improvement Board and sector-led children's improvement.

Item 4 – Autumn Statement update

Members discussed the implications for councils arising from the Autumn Statement pending fuller discussion at the Executive the following day.

12. Note of the last meeting

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

Next meeting: Wednesday, 11 January 2012 at 2.00pm.

CLOSE OF MEETING