

## **LGA Campaigns for 2012-2013**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

1. Leadership Board has previously agreed that the organisation needs to identify a series of policy issues on which it can campaign on behalf of local government in the coming year, and has agreed that these should closely reflect the LGA's business plan and associated corporate objectives for that period.
2. This paper sets out draft, indicative campaign titles, objectives and targets addressing these broader policy areas which, prior to further discussion by the Leadership Board, will then be taken forward to more detailed campaign planning by the LGA's Communications Team working in close partnership with the relevant Boards in each case. Titles are indicative and will be worked on in more depth once broadly agreed.

### **Recommendation**

That the Leadership Board comments on and provides a steer to officers on the proposed campaigns.

### **Action**

Officers to proceed as directed.

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**LGA Leadership Board**  
8 February 2012

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## **LGA Campaigns for 2012-2013**

### **Background**

1. Leadership Board has previously agreed that the organisation needs to identify a series of policy issues on which it can campaign on behalf of local government in the coming year, and has agreed that these should closely reflect the LGA's business plan and associated corporate objectives for that period.
2. At the 11 January Leadership Board therefore, the following broad policy areas were agreed:
  - 2.1 Adult Social Care
  - 2.2 Local Government Funding
  - 2.3 Economic Growth
  - 2.4 Public Service Reform and the impact on local government
3. The rest of this paper sets out suggested campaign targets, themes and topics addressing these broader policy areas which, prior to further discussion by the Leadership Board, will then be taken forward to more detailed campaign planning by the LGA's Communications Team working in close partnership with the relevant Boards in each case.
4. Each proposed campaign is set out in the following way:
  - 4.1 CAMPAIGN THEME/TITLE
  - 4.2 Link to Business Plan priorities
  - 4.3 Campaign description/objectives
  - 4.4 Target audiences
  - 4.5 Measures of a successful outcome
  - 4.6 Policy lead
5. Inclusion in this paper will mean specific endorsement of that campaign by Leadership Board if so agreed. However, it does not necessarily mean that these will be the only campaigns either on that subject or on any other subject to be conducted by the LGA during 2012-13. If the LGA is to remain an influential organisation it will need to be flexible, adapt to any new policy developments, and be ready swiftly to change its plans if that would make it more effective as a campaigning body during the year.

## **CAMPAIGN 1. SECURING THE FUTURE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**Link to Business Plan:** Adult Social Care / Public Service Reform

### **Campaign Description/ Objectives:**

6. With a White Paper expected in April we want the LGA to be highly visible in the run up to its publication. We are proposing five separate pieces of work that, together, allow us to set out a clear overall message on the need to reform and fund adult social care and support.
7. It will allow us to the position the LGA as the authority on reform of the social care system, and will look to ensure we are seen as a primary influencer in pushing for social care legislation and in securing the future of adult social care.
8. In the weeks preceding the White paper we will be issuing a media release to tie in with each of the pieces of work listed below, as well as holding specific events such as the Smith Square debates to further increase awareness of our work to different audiences.
9. The campaign will be refreshed following the publication of the White Paper once it is clear how far the Government are willing to progress any reform of the system.

Pieces of work include:

- 9.1 A 'spotter's guide' to the White Paper – to be launched at the LGA's Social Care Smith Square debate on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

This publication will set out what we hope to see in the White Paper and in so doing will identify 'tests' against which we will judge its effectiveness. This will be a useful vehicle for disseminating all of our main messages and, coming before the White Paper, will provide Parliamentarians, stakeholders and the media with an easy route back to the LGA to get our reaction.

- 9.2 Understanding the finances

There have been numerous recent stories at national and trade level on the adequacy of funding for adult social care. This is a complicated subject with several leading organisations quoting a different funding 'gap' and the government denying the existence of any funding problems. We therefore propose doing some detailed analysis of the current funding situation facing adult social care along with projections of future costs. This information will be invaluable in discussions with both government and the media.

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9.3 The cost of reform

Much has been made in the press about the Government's willingness to fund the recommendations made by the Dilnot Commission (a cost of about £2 billion depending on the calibration of one of the Commission's central proposals – a cap on the amount individuals are required to pay towards their care costs). Given our long-standing and in-principle support of the cap we propose doing some work comparing the cost of reform to other areas of wasteful public spending. Our central message is that the cost of reform is a cost worth paying.

9.4 The economic case for reform

We are aware of the Treasury's hesitancy on funding the Dilnot proposals and believe work that highlights the economic benefits of reform could be a very useful contribution to the debate and the more conventional messages that simply advocate urgent reform. We propose commissioning, or working with, Skills For Care on this work and focusing on workforce (with links to quality) in terms of current/future numbers and potential job creation and market development.

9.5 Raising awareness amongst the public

Linking to activity 9.3 above we propose conducting some simple polling of the general public to gauge their understanding of how the system works, where they think spending should be prioritised and what they think would be a 'fair' system.

10. As much of this work is about being highly visible in the run up to the White Paper, we propose holding briefing meetings with journalists to discuss our work and findings before publishing. Given we have five specific pieces of work we are considering giving exclusivity to particular media outlets to maximise impact.

11. Once the White Paper is published, and we have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, we will refresh the campaign plan to develop a further programme of work to lobby for a Bill. We will also be looking to influence any legislation which may be included in the Queen's speech.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- Increased visibility of LGA message on social care in run up to White Paper publication in parliamentary debates and questions.
- Proactively generate national coverage of LGA issues on reform and funding (and pieces of work detailed below) in each week of March in the run up to the publication of the White Paper.
- LGA spokespeople to be quoted regularly in national media, trades and local press.

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- The LGA to be seen as the authority on reform of the social care system.
- LGA's criteria by which we measure the success of the White Paper (listed in the "spotter's guide" detailed below) are used by stakeholders and the media.
- High level of engagement with the LGA's Smith Square debate on social care.

**Target audiences:**

- Member Councils
- Ministers
- Whitehall
- MPs
- council members
- Media commentators

**Policy Lead:** Sandie Dunne

**CAMPAIGN 2. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Link to business plan:** Finance

**Campaign description/objectives:**

12. We propose a three-phased approach over the next 6 to 9 months, linked to the expected milestones and activities in the Parliamentary and Whitehall calendars:
  - 12.1 Budget on 21 March: making the case for reform by demonstrating the unsustainability of the current system
  - 12.2 LG Finance Bill (April-Autumn 2012): pressing for key reforms to the proposals on business rates retention and the localisation of council tax support
  - 12.3 Setting the path of post-2015 public spending (Autumn 2012): setting out our vision for a reformed system of local government finance

Budget 2012

13. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 29 November signalled the probability of further cuts within this Spending Review period, including the removal of almost £750 million from the local government settlement as a result of the 1% pay cap in 2013-14 and 2014-15. The National Audit Office also warned in March 2011 that Whitehall departments would be significantly at risk of not meeting their Spending Review (SR) targets if they did not improve their financial management. We propose to make the case that local government, having already borne a disproportionate share of the cuts, should not be subject to any further funding reductions within this SR. Using financial projections of

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spending pressures facing local government in to the next SR, we intend to demonstrate both that local government funding should be protected from further cuts in the near term and set up our case for fundamental reform in the future.

Local Government Finance Bill

14. The Local Government Finance Bill focuses on two major elements of local government finance, business rates and council tax reliefs, which provides a ready platform for pushing for greater financial autonomy. We will be pressing for amendments to the Bill that allow councils to retain all of the proceeds from business rates growth and provide councils full flexibility over council tax reliefs. As much of the detail on the operation of the rates retention scheme will be set out in secondary legislation to be laid after the Bill receives Royal Assent, we will also be seeking to influence this secondary legislation as it is developed. Our work on shaping the localisation of business rates and council tax support will then set the stage for the case we make for fundamental reform of the local government finance system.

Post-2015 public spending

15. With work expected to get underway shortly at Treasury to determine the path of public spending after 2015-16, it is also timely for us to build on our Bill work and press for fundamental reform of the whole system of local government finance. The Government signalled in October 2010 that it will consider the total spending figures for local government with a view to more closely aligning local authority functions and responsibilities with business rates income from 2015-16, at the next Spending Review. We need to get ahead of that debate and set out our own vision for the future alignment of local resources and responsibilities, fairness between different places including different parts of the UK, and sustainable revenue sources for the long term.
16. In calling for fundamental reform, we also propose to open up the debate about why locally-financed spending falls within central government's management. At present, the Treasury justifies its control of local government spending, particularly that financed by borrowing, on the grounds that it counts against the nation's balance sheet. However, other jurisdictions around the world do not impose a central control framework on all public borrowing and spending. We believe that a reformed finance system that freed local government from Treasury control would give councils greater power to invest in housing and infrastructure, use their assets in a more effective manner, and ultimately help to generate economic growth across the country.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- To persuade Government to allow local authorities to retain all business rate growth
- To secure greater discretion over council tax reliefs
- To set out the local government case for funding post-2015
- To take locally-financed spending out of central government's control framework

**Target audience/s**

- Member Councils
- HMT and CLG
- Cross-party parliamentarians
- Press / media commentators
- Leaders/councillors
- Chief Executives/Officers
- Business interests

**Policy lead:** Paul Raynes

**CAMPAIGN 3. PLANNING OUR WAY TO GROWTH**

**Link to business plan:** Growth and prosperity

**Campaign description/objectives:**

17. Drawing on the work already underway at the initiation of the Environment and Housing Board (with cross-party support), the objective would be to win increased planning powers and freedoms for councils to better support local economic growth.
18. Despite the supremacy of the Local Plan and the development / production of the soon to be approved National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), councils are still encountering barriers within the planning system which are hindering their ability to shape their areas in line with local priorities such as economic growth – therefore despite the progress of the NPPF, planning continues to be a barrier to true localism and allowing councils the flexibility to think innovatively and support local economic growth in every way possible. We need real localism, which will be a key sub theme of this campaign.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- Restrictions / limits placed upon the power of the Planning Inspectorate, a body which often overturns local planning decisions made by democratically elected councils.



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- A new 'umbrella' use class, into which individual councils can place problematic types of premises within (potentially supported by the recent High Streets review)
- Improvement to existing planning powers (known as 'Article 4 directions') to allow councils to intervene when premises change their use (potentially supported by recent High Streets review). Article 4 directions are currently cumbersome, bureaucratic, and ineffective.
- To dissuade the government from pursuing additional powers for developers to re-open section 106 agreements.

**Target audience/s:**

- Member Councils
- DCLG, DEFRA, BIS
- Cross-party parliamentarians
- Media commentators
- Development industry representative bodies
- Third Sector

**Policy lead:** Sandie Dunne

**CAMPAIGN 4. HOUSING THE NATION**

**Link to business plan:** Growth and prosperity

**Campaign description/objectives:**

19. Drawing on the cross-party supported positions which are already agreed across the political groupings of the Environment and Housing Board, the objective of this campaign would be to win increased housing powers and freedoms so that councils can better address the current 'housing crisis', and in doing so assist with supporting economic growth at a local level, positioning themselves as a driving force for, and supporter of, development.
20. Financial flexibility is required to stimulate the housing market which democratically accountable councils can deliver if they are given the ability to do so. Councils must be given the financial flexibilities to invest in their local area. Current powers to negotiate important section 106 contributions (which deliver crucial infrastructure for communities) must be maintained and not undermined by government proposals to allow developers to reopen s106 agreements.
21. Similarly, local opposition is a huge barrier to new housing development according to feedback from members. The solution to this is good design, appropriate infrastructure and the involvement of communities and their elected representatives in planning for their place.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- To win flexibility for councils to retain capital receipts from right to buy sales and to be able to set the discount locally.
- To agree a menu of design standards which can be used by councils and industry to assist with improving the acceptability of development at a local level
- To dissuade the government from pursuing additional powers for developers to reopen section 106 agreements.

**Target audience/s**

- Member Councils
- Defra, DCLG, BIS
- Cross-party parliamentarians
- Press / media commentators
- Development, construction, and housing industry representative bodies, and private sector design councils

**Policy lead:** Sandie Dunne

**CAMPAIGN 5. LOCAL ECONOMIES, LOCAL GROWTH**

**Link to business plan:** Growth and prosperity

**Campaign description/objectives:**

22. Building on ongoing efforts led by the Economy and Transport Board (with cross-party support on the Board), this campaign will continue to solidify the position of local government within the debate around economic growth – the number one priority for England and Wales and for the Coalition Government.
23. Demonstrating to Government how councils and localities can assist with the economic recovery programme (despite the level of cuts they are facing), this campaign will seek to deliver new measures that will assist local areas with their innovative approaches to local economic growth. As a result, the messaging will reinforce the fact that councils are just getting on with this, something of which Government and the public are perhaps not fully aware. Drawing on international comparisons, and building strong relationships with the business sector (to establish this as a joint campaign with them), will both be crucial to this campaign.

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24. The LGA is already due to publish a Green Paper on economic growth at the LGA national conference this summer as part of the Local Growth project, which can be brought within the remit of this campaign. The content of the Green Paper can form the focus for the new-look campaign, detailing our key asks.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- “City plus” deals for those local authorities and LEPs that wish to have the ability to negotiate preferential deals with Government, on the same basis as the current ‘City deals’.
- Single local regeneration budgets
- Further devolution of transport policy to a local level
- A flexible and favourable outcome to the Local Government Resource Review
- Further incentives to encourage closer working between councils and local businesses, such as Business Improvement Districts
- Inward investment potential by tapping into the ‘GREAT’ campaign which, developed by Cabinet Office, is being offered to local councils for uptake

**Target audience/s**

- Member Councils
- BIS, DCLG, Cabinet Office
- Cross-party Parliamentarians
- Press / public commentators
- Other opinion-formers such as think tanks such as Centre for Cities and IPPR
- Business associations

**Policy lead:** Ian Hughes

**CAMPAIGN 6. INDEPENDENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Link to business plan:** Public Service Reform

**Campaign description/objectives:**

25. To create a debate in the sector led by the LGA and Chair of the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, Graham Allen MP (GA), about codifying the relationship between central and local government as endorsed by the LGA and Parliament.
26. It is often unclear who is ultimately responsible for what when it comes to funding and deciding how to provide local public services. The electorate are disadvantaged and confused by this lack of clarity, with local people not

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knowing why their councils cannot always provide the services their local community needs.

27. With nothing that stipulates exactly what the rights and responsibilities of central and local government are, this confusion is set to continue. A new code between local and central government would settle this once and for all.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

Evidence of a growing debate about the issue in media and other external channels. If there is an appetite for a code, we can aim to get a commitment included in the Coalition Refresh.

**Target audiences:**

- Member Councils
- Leaders/councillors
- Chief Execs/Officers
- National Politicians
- Commentators & Academics

**Policy lead:** Paul Raynes and Rebecca Cox

**CAMPAIGN 7. HIDDEN TALENTS**

**Link to the business plan:** Growth and Prosperity / Public Service Reform

**Campaign description/objectives:**

28. Over one million young people are not in education, employment or training and the unemployment rate amongst 16 -24 year olds is the highest it has been since records began. Youth services have been hit by cuts and help for young people is split across a number of different public sector.
29. Beneath the headlines are a group of more marginalised young people (super-NEETs) that are being pushed further and further from employment; this group is growing in size faster than any other, reflecting a failure in government policy to support them.
30. Councils are best placed to identify and support this most marginalised group, for instance national government cannot possibly know which of the current 550,000 young people out of work for under 6 months is at risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- Pool services and funding for the most marginalised young people around them in places, with a leading role for local partners in commissioning all services relevant to their development. Funding currently fragmented and top down, confusing for young people and all services involved
- Particularly relevant for skills provision, with greater involvement of local employers in shaping all services to ensure young people are equipped with skills and experience valuable in the local labour market; now and in the future
- Strong quality assurance of services, refocusing on quality over quantity, with a leading role for councils in quality assuring any payments-by-results funding
- Give young people themselves a leading voice in shaping these services, councils have set up youth parliaments etc to do this for local services, but this doesn't exist at all for services funded centrally by government or its agencies (which is now most)

**Target audiences:**

- Member councils
- Leaders/councillors
- Chief Execs/Officers
- National Politicians
- Businesses
- Young people

**Policy lead:** Ian Hughes

**CAMPAIGN 8. Keep it REAL:** Responsive, Efficient, Accountable Local Services

**Link to Business Plan:** Public Service Reform

**Campaign Description/ Objectives:**

31. Promote the role of elected councillors in ensuring electors get the services they want; in particular
  - 31.1 Promote local government's ambition for public services that are responsive, efficient, accountable and local (REAL).
  - 31.2 Highlight and reinforce local government's reputation as the most efficient, accountable and innovative part of the public sector
  - 31.3 Demonstrate that councils are at the heart of reforming public services and that local democracy gives councillors a unique mandate from electors both in shaping services and providing performance management/redress.
  - 31.4 Make the case for councils to have the autonomy and flexibility they need to make services REAL; champion further decentralisation of services; and

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dissuade government from prescribing new approaches or introducing burdensome inspection, monitoring and regulation systems.

31.5 Support councils in reforming services through the dissemination of good practice and innovation and achievements.

**Target (measurable) outcomes:**

- The next iteration of government policy on public service reform (further to the Open Public Services white paper in 2011) recognises local government's crucial role in reforming services and does not attempt to prescribe approaches to commissioning.
- Government delivers on commitment to decentralise commissioning in a range of services, particularly economic development, skills and public transport.
- Bureaucratic central monitoring, regulation and inspection of services are further reduced / prevented in the implementation of government's reform agenda.
- Councils successfully use new tools and flexibilities (for example those provided by the Localism Act) to change the way they deliver services.
- Positive coverage in media and at national events and speeches of what councils have achieved by innovative and effective reform of services.

**Target audiences:**

- Member Councils
- National politicians
- Leaders / councillors
- Chief Executives / senior officers
- Media commentators

**Policy Lead:** Paul Raynes