

Public Affairs Review and Forward Plan

Purpose of Report

To review forthcoming events, legislation and announcements.

Summary

September to December 2012, activities, events and legislation.

Recommendation

That the Leadership Board notes the content of the plan.

Action

For Information.

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Public Affairs and Campaigns forward plan – September to December 2012

Priorities:

Lobbying

- Ongoing lobbying support for delivery of 2012/13 Business Plan priorities;
- Lobbying priorities based on the Bills announced in the Queen's Speech, on 9 May, as agreed by the Leadership Board;
- Potentially the Economic Regeneration Bill depending upon content;
- Lobbying on LGA campaigns, as agreed by Leadership Board, as well as ongoing projects being driven by the Boards;
- Local Government Finance Bill – the LGA was successful in tabling amendments for the Committee Stage. The Bill will now move into Report Stage where we are working with Peers to gain flexibility on Council Tax Benefit discounts for local authorities;
- Adult Social Care reform in light of White Paper publication;
- Scrap Metal Bill, where we have been successful in securing the tabling of amendments;
- Lobbying in support of Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Private Members Bill.

Campaigns

1. The LGA Annual Conference was constructed as a platform for the LGA campaigns, and feedback showed that this worked. The Launch of our Future Funding Report was especially well received.
2. Since the conference, we have worked to realign the campaigns as workstreams under one overarching narrative, as parts of a solution to funding issues and unlocking economic growth. This will form the basis of our Autumn series of Smith Square Debates.

Finance Campaign:

3. The Finance Team have followed up the Future Funding Publication with individual authority calculations, which have been sent to all councils that requested them, and are now producing an analysis of statutory duties. Work is also underway on a "Council of the Future" publication for Party Conferences, which will highlight all of the campaigns and how, together they provide a blueprint for a solution to the country's economic difficulties.
4. Planning is underway for a Finance Conference in December.

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Hidden Talents:

5. As part of the campaign, Cllr Shona Johnstone gave evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on youth unemployment and the Youth Contract on 27 June. This was a useful opportunity to highlight the key messages from the Hidden Talents campaign. The Select Committee report is expected in October. On 10 July, the LGA, with the Prince's Trust also held a cross-party Parliamentary roundtable on youth unemployment. The roundtable was chaired by Cllr David Simmonds with contributions from Martina Milburn, Chief Executive of the Prince's Trust, councillors and more than ten Peers and MPs.
6. The LGA commissioned and published research by the Centre for Economic Inclusion (CESI) on the skills mismatch between education providers and local economic requirements. This received significant coverage in the national press, including a feature article in the Observer. A number of meetings with MPs and peers and third party organisations have taken place as a result of this research and have provided further opportunity to emphasise our messages. The LGA has also commissioned research on graduate unemployment and this was published in the week beginning 10 September.
7. The LGA also submitted written evidence to the Education Select Committee on the issue of careers guidance on 3 September. We hope to give oral evidence as well, using the opportunity to utilise research we have commissioned on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.
8. The LGA has also been working with councils and stakeholders to further build the evidence base for our asks. On the 21 September, we will be holding a roundtable for council officers and local stakeholders to discuss and share best practice. The evidence base will form a final report, which will be launched at the end October/early November. We are also in discussions with the Work Foundation on hosting a panel debate on the issue of youth unemployment in November.
9. We will continue working with Parliamentarians and stakeholders to build momentum behind the campaign.

Growth/ Housing the Nation (HTN):

10. Following its launch in June, activity through the *Housing the Nation* campaign has included launch of the Local Housing Delivery Steering Group's work on viability and local standards; launching the findings of our councillor-based research on obstacles to local development; engagement with the CLG Select Committee and LGA Vice-Presidents; and commissioning and publishing the findings of LGA research into planning permissions. On growth, work is underway to continue with the LGA's town hall events around the country, collecting and disseminating best practice on how local councils are driving economic growth. And on city deals specifically, we are continuing to push central government to expand this policy so that any council or group of councils can bid for a bespoke economic agreement with Whitehall.

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11. Going forward throughout the autumn, the focus of *Housing the Nation* will be broadened to encompass the wider issues of growth, in addition to housing. This will seek to reflect the renewed attention being placed on the planning system as a driver for growth, as well as wider issues of economic growth (some of which could potentially be included in forthcoming government legislation). Within this element of work, the campaign will seek to promote and push the LGA's recommendations for, and solutions to, economic growth.

Independent Local Government:

12. The publication *Independent local government: Next steps* was launched at the LGA conference in June. Since its launch the LGA held a parliamentary reception in June to promote the publication. We are now engaging with the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee's inquiry into codifying the relationship between national and local government. A working group led by Cllr Robert Light has now been formed to input into the LGA's formal written evidence.
13. On 6 September the Chairman gave evidence to the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee inquiry into the possibility of creating a Constitutional Convention for the UK. This was an opportunity to further the campaign by highlighting the importance of granting local government greater autonomy, the need to give local government a more secure constitutional footing and the potential economic benefits of freeing councils to deliver local economic growth.
14. During the autumn we will be working with parliamentarians to continue to build profile for the campaign and its objectives.

Stakeholder management

- De-briefing sessions with Peers ahead of Report Stage of Local Government Finance Bill;
- Political contact programme for Chairman and Chief Executive as required;
- Political contact programme for Board Chairs and LGA officers as required;
- Planning is well under way for the LGA's Annual Parliamentary reception in November;
- Organising Autumn Smith Square Debates;
- Coordinating, LGA presence and speaking opportunities at Autumn 2012 Party Conferences;
- Supporting the activities of LGA Vice-Presidents in Parliament, in addition to wider parliamentarians, in line with 2012/13 Business Plan priorities and campaigns.

Marketing

- Updated 'guide to services' for 2012/13;
- Promotion of online offer including LG Inform and Knowledge Hub;
- Continued promotion of sector-led improvement (cross programme);
- Support to programmes;
- Brand management – the reputation of the LGA, with particular focus on promotional activity;
- Marketing support for LGA campaigns.

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Survey

15. We have received the results of our Attitudes and Awareness Parliamentary Monitor April-May Survey of MPs.

The full analysis is included as an **Annex** to this document.

The headlines are as follows:

- Our comparator organisations are Big Lottery Fund, Charity Commission, General Medical Council, NHS Confederation, Ofcom, Royal College of Nursing, Electoral Commission, British Medical Association, Sport England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK Sport, Royal College of GPs, Arts Council England, Nuffield Trust, and British Dental Association .
- During the period from November 2011, there was a uniform decline in how effective MPs found the organisations working in Westminster. The research agency attribute this to mid-term fatigue and the current very busy political agenda making it difficult for organisations to get their voices heard.
- 50% of MPs found the LGA effective or very effective, which placed us third as ranked with all comparator organisations. We were ranked equally effective by Labour and Conservative MPs, and slightly higher by Liberal Democrats.
- The relative equality of this statistic would seem to demonstrate that we are equally engaged and effective across all parties. The research agency commented that no other organisation seems to be as consistently regarded across all parties.
- Four of our campaigns (Be a Councillor, Social Care, Hidden Talents and Independent Local Government ranked in the top ten of recognition of all the listed organisations campaigns, with Be a Councillor ranking at number 1.
- Our correspondence and briefings to Westminster, together with our publications, were the most recalled forms of contact, with face-to-face meetings in Westminster being rated as the most influential form of contact. Overall, MPs state that engagement at constituency level has the most influence over what they do on issues of concern.

The results will inform our communications and public affairs strategy.

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Look ahead

Month:	September	October	November	December
External events	Party conferences: Liberal Democrat 22-26 th September Labour 30 th Sept – 4 th Oct	Conservative 7-10 th Oct		
Meetings, speeches, select ctte inquiries	DWP Select Committee on Universal Credit Constitutional Reform Education Select Committee inquiry into careers guidance. APPG on Local Growth report on LEPs	APPG on Child Protection Seminars Education Select Committee oral evidence session on careers guidance expected. Education Select Committee deadline for evidence on Sure Start Children's Centres. Deadline of 5 October for submitting the LGA evidence into codifying the relationship between national and local government	Possible evidence session with APPG on Adoption and Fostering.	LGA parliamentary on street works (tbc)

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<p>Legislation</p>	<p>Amendments to Metal Theft Bill</p> <p>Draft Children and Families Bill expected to be published.</p> <p>Submission of the evidence into the Draft Water Bill</p>	<p>LG Finance Bill Lords Report Stage commences 10th October</p> <p>Deadline for pre-legislative scrutiny of SEN and Family Justice Review clauses of draft Children and Families Bill (Select Committee inquiries)</p> <p>Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Audit Bill is due to be announced.</p> <p>Economic Regeneration Bill expected to be published</p> <p>Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Bill, Commons Committee Stage expected</p>	<p>Pre-legislative scrutiny of Draft Children and Families Bill.</p>	
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Campaigns	<p>Social Care – Launch of Guide to Reform w/b 10th Finance – lobbying ahead of Lords Report Stage of Finance Bill</p> <p>Hidden Talents shared learning roundtable with officers.</p> <p>Growth/HTN: LGA recommendations on growth to be published, with supporting parliamentary activity to follow</p> <p>Growth/HTN: City Deals announcement expected</p>	<p>Hidden Talents Evidence Report to be launched (date tbc)</p> <p>Growth/HTN: Economic Regeneration Bill expected to be published by HMT</p>	<p>Hidden Talents - ongoing engagement with Parliamentarians.</p> <p>Growth/HTN: 21 November, one year anniversary of DCLG housing strategy</p> <p>Growth/HTN: 14 November, LGA parliamentary reception on housing, hosted by Lord Best</p>	Finance Conference
Marketing				
Major LGA events/conferences	<p>LGA annual rural conference 2012</p> <p>Town hall summit on councils' role in driving economic growth</p>		<p>Smith Square Debates: Growth: 7th Nov Funding: 21 Nov Social Care: 28 Nov Future Councils: 5 Dec</p> <p>16 November, LGA Green</p>	<p>17 December, Local government finance conference – preparing for change</p> <p>19 December, Housing the Nation? Financing</p>

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	26 September, Managing the night-time economy		Deal and ECO conference 28 November, Annual Safer communities conference: partnership working in a new world	new homes
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