

Chief Executive's Monthly Report – October 2012

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction

Summary

The LGA business plan 2012/13 centres on five priorities –

- Public service reform
- Growth, jobs and prosperity
- Funding for local government
- Efficiency and productivity
- Sector-led improvement

The monthly Chief Executive's report sets out the LGA's main achievements against those priorities, along with our performance against key corporate indicators, including membership and budget.

Recommendation

That the Leadership Board notes Chief Executive's report for October 2012.

Action

Further Chief Executive's report to be provided on a monthly basis.

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Part 1- achievements against our five main priorities

Priority 1 – Public Service Reform

- Met **Jeremy Hunt** to raise our key concerns surrounding **adult social care**. We asked the Secretary of State for Health to respond to funding issues, improve legislation and give the health of children and young people a higher priority in the health reforms.
- Held a meeting with a number of senior officers and members to discuss where local government needs to position itself over the coming months to secure the changes needed to **adult social care reform**.
- Cllr David Rogers, chair of the Community Wellbeing Board, responded to the recent NHS Confederation report on **social care funding pressures**, highlighting the need for new funding rather than simply taking money out of the NHS
- Worked closely with the Department of Health on a trailblazer scheme for councils adopting **Social Impact Bonds** as a method of funding and delivering adult social care.
- Progressed work to clarify the legal situation around the potential for **transfer of displaced benefits administration staff** to the DWP bodies that will administer Universal Credit.
- Cllr Rogers wrote to Anna Soubry, new Minister of State for Health, emphasising the need for local authorities to be adequately and fairly funded for their **new public health responsibilities**.
- Responded to the consultation on **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies**.
- Tabled amendments which resulted in the **Scrap Metal Dealers Bill** being amended at committee stage to allow councils to set fees for dealer licences locally, subject to guidance from the Home Office; published a handbook for councillors on tackling metal theft.
- Published a guide for **police and crime panels** on how they can scrutinise police and crime commissioners.

Priority 2 - Growth, jobs and prosperity

- Launched our report on **graduate unemployment**, highlighting the record numbers of university leavers failing to find work, with almost half still looking three months after graduating, and local government's offer to deliver an effective, localist programme of support. The report findings featured in the Observer.
- Held a workshop with councils looking at innovative solutions to reduce **youth unemployment**. The evidence will reinforce our call for locally driven public services – such as skills and apprenticeships.
- Lobbied Norman Baker MP as part of our ongoing work with Dept of Transport ministers to ensure that the **devolution of transport funding** is done efficiently. Whilst welcoming the agreement to devolve major project funding which has been a long-term LGA objective, we raised concerns that Whitehall must not attempt to impose unnecessary national rules of projects assessment and governance.
- Held the first "**Town Hall debate**" (part of the LGA's Local Growth Campaign) in this cycle in Hertfordshire. Supported by Dacorum and Watford Borough Councils and local business leaders, Cllr Peter Box set out the LGA growth work over the next year and how we would be delivering the recommendations of our conference report, Local Leadership, Local Growth.
- In response to government announcements on **housing and planning**, secured significant media coverage for our argument that the proposals will not address the underlying economic issues that are stalling development. LGA-commissioned research shows councils responding positively to new development, with 400,000 unimplemented planning permissions in place for new homes. Chairman Sir Merrick Cockell and Environment Board Vice Chairman Cllr Clyde Loakes conducted several interviews for national media.
- More than 100 delegates attended the **LGA Rural Commission and conference** to debate issues including rural growth, the Green Deal, new public health responsibilities and Broadband rollout. New Defra Secretary of State Owen Paterson made his first public speech following launch of the Government's Rural Statement - a cross-government commitment to rural growth.
- Submitted written evidence to the EFRA Select Committee's inquiry into the **draft Water Bill** reflecting council concerns that the draft Bill is a missed opportunity to strengthen relationships and alignment of plans between water companies, councils and OFWAT and reduce red tape.
- Made the case to VisitEngland for local government representation on its Board. Our response highlighted councils' vital leadership role in the **visitor economy**, which is this country's fifth biggest industry and one of the few sectors experiencing growth.
- Established contact with the Cabinet Office's new **Legacy Unit**, headed by Lord Coe, and secured a commitment to work closely with LGA and councils on spreading the legacy from the 2012 Games across the whole country.

Priority 3 - Funding for local government

- Won an additional £100 million of capital funding from DfE to support **the expansion of pre-school education**.
- Received confirmation of a further £25 million from Landsbanki in repayment of councils' **Icelandic investments**.
- LGA Vice Chair, Cllr David Sparks, led a cross-party delegation to Brussels to lobby English MEPs and senior Commission and Brussels-based Whitehall staff to secure **EU funding for local regeneration** after the 2013 reforms of the EU budget. They put the case for local delivery of EU funds and sought MEP support for our position during key Parliamentary votes in the European Parliament the autumn.
- Responded to the Government's **technical consultation on business rates**. Our response called for major revision of a number of aspects of the new scheme so that it can deliver its basic offer of funding growth. We are now pressing these points in both our politically led discussions with Ministers and in our detailed work with officials.
- Released our **analysis of councils' reserves** showing that reserves will run out in five years if local authorities are forced to use them to cover the expected cuts in central Government funding, undermining growth in the process. Chairman Sir Merrick's remarks were quoted in the Observer.
- Secured coverage on several news networks for our release about councils calling for emergency government funding to help cover multi-million repair bills for **flood-damaged roads**.
- Replied to the consultation on replacing **LACSEG**. We argued, and will continue to argue, that that the proposal to remove £1.22bn of funding takes out far too much money and that the proposed per pupil amount to be handed back for costs is far too little.

Priority 4 - Efficiency & productivity

- Launched a refresh of the LGA's interactive **Shared Services Map**. The map helps to promote an understanding of the number, variety and depth of local government shared services going on across the country as well as enables an efficiency figure to be attributed to shared services nationally.
- Following consultation of Fire Brigades Union members in August, agreement on a **pay settlement for fire fighters** has been reached.
- Put forward arguments to and avoid a fourth year of **pay freeze** in 2013.

Priority 5 - Sector-led improvement

- Launched 'Are you being served?' – a set of **resident satisfaction, crime and cohesion questions** that councils can choose to use in their local surveys, and guidance on the conditions that must be met to enable the results to be **benchmarked** against others who follow the same approach.
- So far over 60 participants are booked on the **Young Councillors weekend** on 24 – 25 November 2012, with sessions including: innovation, local economic growth, climate change, personal impact, social media and climate change.
- Recruited 80 graduates to Cohort 14 of the **National Graduate Development Programme** based at 42 councils and the LGA. This is nearly double the numbers of Cohort 13.
- The third of five **pilot African peer reviews**, commissioned by the pan-African LGA, was supported by UK council peers in Cameroon. The pilots are intended to test whether the English peer support programmes can be adapted to help support good, local governance across Africa.
- Secured funding from Arts Council England for a **new improvement offer for museums**, comprising free leadership seminars for portfolio holders and peer support.
- Launched a **new visitor economy community** on Knowledge Hub to facilitate the exchange of good practice and the identification of key issues for councils.
- Provided support to **Rochdale Council** through the LGA's principal advisors and media team during the period of publication of the report on child sexual exploitation. This support is ongoing.
- Hosted a meeting for the Dignity in Care, Dementia Action Alliance and Think Local Act Personal partnerships to discuss the commissioning and provision of **personalised and high quality care**.
- The **Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care** programme published its first report on the progress of adult social care in England. The document will provide a baseline picture and tools which councils can use to analyse and benchmark improvement.
- Launched eight **Universal Credit pilots**. A series of regional roadshows will take place in early 2013 to showcase learning from the pilots.
- A programme of research into the creation of new **mutuals/social enterprises** by local authority staff is now complete. It will form the basis of a web based resource containing eight case studies covering a range of different services.
- The LGA has been instrumental in the establishment of the **Fire Strategic Resilience Board**. It met for the second time on 3 October to consider an emerging analysis of national resilience gaps and how they can be filled.

Part 2 – Performance against our corporate priorities

Priority 6 - Our own efficiency and effectiveness

Delivery

International **Social Media Week** in September provided a unique opportunity to further stimulate the use of social media by councillors and councils and enhance the reputation of local government. With the support of Cllr Peter Fleming and the Improvement and Innovation Board, we developed two initiatives:

- A twenty four hour “**tweetathon**” on 27 September. Councils were invited to use #OurDay to provide a snapshot of the depth and breadth of council services.
- A **Social Media Friendly Mark** for councils to display on papers and websites, signalling their commitment to the use of social media during meetings. The artwork has already been widely downloaded.
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Highlights of the #OurDay Tweetathon included:

- #OurDay remained a **top ten** UK Twitter topic throughout the day.
- Over **4,000** contributors – including corporate council Twitter accounts, individual councillors and officers and subject specific accounts (eg dog wardens, parks and gardens)
- Over **10,000** tweets ranging from a running commentary on daily activities to online ‘surgeries’ for residents
- The #OurDay hashtag reached almost **800,000** people on the day
- Local and national press coverage including the Guardian and regional BBC interviews.

The LGA’s **ICT strategy** has now been completed. Improvements to our ICT governance arrangements are being put in place and over the next three months the key ICT developments for 2013-14 will be reviewed, including the appropriate level of investment in our on-line offer.

Membership

The current membership position remains unchanged with 423 authorities in membership, two (Bromley and Slough) out of membership and 30 on notice. The Resources Panel have commenced their annual review of subscriptions, which will be presented to the Leadership Board in December.

A list of planned visits to member councils by the Chairman, Chief Executive and Executive Director is attached at **annexe 1**.

Chairman, Chief Executive and Directors' visits to member councils

Table 1 – confirmed

2012			
19 October	Bournemouth	Sir Merrick Cockell	South West
19 October	Bassetlaw	Carolyn Downs	East Midlands
24 October	Basildon	Carolyn Downs	East of England
31 October	Ipswich	Michael Coughlin	East of England
9 November	Wigan	Carolyn Downs	North West
9 November	West Lancashire	Carolyn Downs	North West
11 November	South West Councils	Sir Merrick Cockell	South West
14 November	North West Event	Michael Coughlin	North West
14 November	Sefton	Michael Coughlin	North West
16 November	Rotherham	Carolyn Downs	Y&H
23 November	Cumbria CC and Districts	Carolyn Downs	North West
23 November	Worcestershire Chief Execs Panel Meeting	Michael Coughlin	West Midlands
23 November	Kent Forum	Sir Merrick Cockell	South East
3 December	Lincolnshire CC	Carolyn Downs	East Midlands
3 December	<i>Nottingham CEX Dinner – TBC</i>	Carolyn Downs	East Midlands
4 December	Northamptonshire	Sir Merrick Cockell	East Midlands
6 December	Manchester CC – Visiting LGA	Carolyn Downs	North West
6 December	Stockport	Michael Coughlin	North West
6 December	Rochdale	Michael Coughlin	North West
7 December	DCN Meeting – N Yorks	Michael Coughlin	Y&H
2013			
17 January	Warwickshire CEX Panel	Michael Coughlin	West Midlands
25 January	Cumbria Leaders Forum	Sir Merrick Cockell	North West
28 January	North West Council CEX Meeting	Carolyn Downs	North West
31 January	Yorkshire & Humber CEX Meeting	Carolyn Downs	Yorkshire & Humber
5 February	Portsmouth	Carolyn Downs & Sir Merrick Cockell	South East

Table 2 – Awaiting confirmation of dates

	South East CEX Meeting		South East
	North Lincs	Michael Coughlin	Yorkshire & Humber
	Rushcliffe BC	Carolyn Downs	East Midlands
	Norwich City Council and County	Carolyn Downs	East of England
	Oxfordshire County Council	Michael Coughlin	South East
	Oxford City Council	Michael Coughlin	South East
	Worcestershire County Council	Carolyn Downs	West Midlands
	Hull and East Riding	Sir Merrick Cockell	Yorkshire & Humber
	York and North Yorkshire (Northallerton)	Sir Merrick Cockell	Yorkshire & Humber
	Croydon	Sir Merrick Cockell	South East
	Richmond	Sir Merrick Cockell and Carolyn Downs	South East
	Southend	Sir Merrick Cockell	East of England
	Oxfordshire	Sir Merrick Cockell	East of England
	Cheshire East Council	Sir Merrick Cockell	North West
	Lancaster and Preston	Sir Merrick Cockell	North West
	Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Meeting	Sir Merrick Cockell	Yorkshire & Humber
	Waverley	Michael Coughlin	South East
	West Berkshire	Michael Coughlin	South East
	Brighton & Hove	Michael Coughlin	South East
	Stockton	Carolyn Downs	North East
	Darlington	Carolyn Downs	North East
	Hartlepool	Carolyn Downs	North East
	HLOW CEX Group	Michael Coughlin	South East
	West Somerset	Michael Coughlin	South West
	North Somerset	Michael Coughlin	South West
	Waverley and Surrey Districts	Michael Coughlin	South East