

Chief Executive's Monthly Report – July 2013

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The LGA business plan 2013/14 centres on three priorities:

- Funding for local government;
- Economic growth, jobs and prosperity; and
- Public service reform.

The monthly Chief Executive's report sets out the LGA's main achievements against those priorities. It also summarises how we are supporting councils through our core improvement services, and how we are managing our own efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendation

That Leadership Board notes the Chief Executive's report for July 2013.

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Part 1- Achievements against our three priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- Responded to the Spending Round announcements with an initial response from the Chairman followed by individual statements on funding for social care, school improvement and the Local Growth pot. Sir Merrick was reported in BBC Online, Times, Guardian, Financial Times, Independent, Telegraph, Mail, C4 News Online and ITV News Online and was interviewed on BBC Five Live, BBC Breakfast, Radio 4's World at One, Sky News and Channel 5 News. Cllr Mehboob Khan appeared on ITV's Daybreak and BBC Daily Politics while Cllr David Sparks spoke to BBC News.
- In advance of the Spending Round, the Chairman and Chief Executive held talks with the Secretary of State for Health on funding for adult social care and the importance of integration to alleviate pressure on the system. The subsequent additional £2bn funding for health and social care is the outcome of those discussions and prolonged proactive work with NHS England
- A letter signed by the Chairman, Group Leaders and 150 cross-party council leaders was published in the Observer, warning that further cuts will affect local services. Our Treasury submission was discussed on the Daily Politics Show. Sir Merrick gave an interview to the Telegraph calling for people in England to have their own government minister to fight their case because they are faring worse than Scotland and Wales in key spending decisions.
- Responded in the Guardian to a Public Accounts Committee report warning that cuts to council funding could lead to financial collapse in some local authorities. Cllr Peter Fleming, Chair of the Improvement Board, discussed the findings on the ITV Daybreak sofa.
- Lobbied a number of Government departments for regeneration resources for councils, including more funding for roads. Cllr Peter Box, Chair of the Economy and Transport Board, appeared on BBC5 Live calling for more funding for the pothole backlog. Our release was reported in the Times, Sun, Mail, Mirror, Star, Telegraph, Independent and Sky News.
- Briefed Peers ahead of the Committee stage of the Local Audit and Accountability Bill. So far the Government has agreed to revise the Bill to include a framework for national procurement of audit, estimated to save between £205 and £250 million over five years compared with local appointment. The LGA is working closely with Government and parliamentarians on the detailed amendments.
- Sir Merrick gave evidence to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee on community budgets and how the Treasury can incentivise Whitehall to take this forward.
- Spoke at the Government's conference to launch the EU structural funds consultation. Whilst welcoming Government's plans for localising these funds, we registered concerns over the shift of resources to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Priority 2 – Economic growth, jobs and prosperity

- Published the findings of our local waste review, 'Wealth from Waste', revealing that the UK's rubbish could create 51,000 jobs and bring £3 billion into the economy by 2020, and calling for design of local waste services to remain with councils and their residents. Recent polling showed that nearly 9 out of 10 people are satisfied regardless of frequency of collection. Cllr Mehboob Khan discussed the findings on BBC Breakfast and Cllr Clyde Loakes on BBC 5 Live. They were reported in the Times, Independent and Express. .
- Reached the first anniversary of Climate Local - the LGA's initiative to drive, inspire and support council action on climate change. 70 councils have signed up, with 300 members of the support network. The programme showcases how councils are helping people reduce energy costs, tackle fuel poverty and support the local economy through increased resilience to extreme weather and green growth.
- Cllr Mehboob Khan discussed councils' promotion of the Green Deal on BBC Radio 4's You and Yours, and Cllr Peter Fleming took part in an hour-long discussion on restoring the health of the UK's high streets.
- Organised a meeting between Council Chief Executives and BIS directors to look at the future of local growth policy. Councils expressed concern over the growing number of initiatives that needed to be joined up at local level and the perceived diminishing enthusiasm for City Deal freedoms in Whitehall. BIS has agreed to establish a Sounding Board for councils to discuss the direction of local growth policy.
- Issued a briefing ahead of a Delegated Legislation Committee debate, on our concerns over the government's proposals to designate councils "poorly performing" on planning grounds under the Growth and Infrastructure Act. http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/planning/-/journal_content/56/10171/4031014/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE. Designation will mean that applicants may opt for major application to be handled by either the local planning authority or the Planning Inspectorate. Our strong opposition to the legislation was widely referenced.
- Met with the British Parking Association to discuss the Transport Select Committee's on-going inquiry into parking enforcement. The LGA's recommendation that the Transport Select Committee consider holding an inquiry on the strategic road network was taken up and confirmed when the Committee published their 2013/14 work programme on 24 June.
- LGA evidence to the Institute of Civil Engineers inquiry "State of the Nation: Transport" was widely supported in the resulting report, published in June. The recommendations called for urgent action on road maintenance and greater devolution of powers.
- Recent legal judgements: issued advice to councils on the implications of *Hemming v Westminster* for councils' full cost recovery through local licensing fees. Safer and Stronger Communities Board will consider the implications of the successful challenge against Newham's decision to reject a gambling licence for Paddy Power at their next meeting.
- Gave oral evidence to the public bill committee for the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill on the tools councils need to tackle anti-social behaviour;

- Held a conference to support councils implementing the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, which will introduce a licensing regime for scrap metal dealers.
- Launched a new visitor economy publication highlighting how councils are driving growth through tourism, and briefed MPs and Peers ahead of two separate debates on the importance of arts and culture to the economy. Our report 'Driving growth through local government investment in the arts' was widely referenced.

Priority 3 – Public services reform

- Attended the inaugural meeting of the Senior Oversight Group to oversee the NHS contribution to the new public health system. The Group is an important component of the developing governance and accountability framework for the new health and care system and the LGA will continue to support and promote the role of local authorities as the local leaders of public health.
- Alongside written evidence, Andrew Webster, Associate Director of Integrated Care, gave oral evidence, to two Health Select Committee inquiries. Emergency care - questions focused on how emergency care could be integrated and commissioned and how issues of capacity, resources and a lack of continuity should be best addressed. Implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 – highlighted local government's demonstrable commitment to the health reform agenda, in particular transfer of public health, procurement of local Healthwatch and creation of Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- Responded to the launch of Public Health England's Longer Lives website which shows mortality rates across the country website and ranks local authorities in terms of premature mortality. Cllrs Zoe Patrick and Jonathan McShane, of the Community Wellbeing Board, were interviewed by the Telegraph, Times, Independent, Mail, Guardian, Mirror, BBC Online, Sky News Online and on BBC News.
- Cllr David Simmonds, Chair of Children and Young People Board, was interviewed on Radio 4 Women's Hour on calls for kinship carers to receive the same financial support as foster parents.
- Launched the LGA/Government Property Unit 'One Public Estate Programme' - a central-local programme aiming to aid local and central government asset holders to unblock any barriers to a more integrated approach to capital assets in an area.
- In response to a new Government code governing public use of surveillance cameras, highlighted the preventative role of cameras in deterring violence and theft and the work councils undertake with licensees to ensure all safeguards are proportionate and necessary.
- Secured a commitment from the Government that the reforms set out in the Care Bill will be fully funded. Subsequently worked with LGA President Lord Best and Vice Presidents to

table amendments ahead of committee stage to facilitate a debate on baseline funding for social care, integration and quality of services.

- Following briefings to MPs ahead of the Remaining Stages of the Children and Families Bill in the House of Commons, the Government has offered assurances that it will amend the Bill. Briefed Peers ahead of Second Reading in the House of Lords and worked with Barnardo's to raise awareness of our concerns over some measures aimed at improving adoption.
- Our concerns about the ceasing of the contracting out rebate were raised by a number of MPs ahead of the Second Reading of the Pensions Bill. We are continuing to work with MPs in order to highlight this issue as the Bill progresses through the House of Commons.
- Briefed MPs from across the political benches ahead of the House of Commons Second Reading debate (10 June) on the anti-social, crime and policing bill. Cllrs Mehboob Khan and Angela Mawdsley (Leeds City Council) gave oral evidence to the anti-social, crime and policing bill committee on 18 June.

Part 2 - Sector-led support, improvement and innovation – our core services

- Cllr David Simmonds outlined councils' work to improve protection of children from sexual exploitation to BBC Radio 5 Live in response to a Home Affairs Select Committee report claiming that vulnerable children in the UK are still being failed by local authorities.
- Launched the 'Council Leaders' Key Action for Innovation', checklist, allowing council leaders to review whether there is more they might do to encourage innovation in their councils. This was part of the work carried out by the LGA in partnership with the Accelerating Innovation in Local Government Research project which looked council leaders' role in fostering innovation.
- Delivered the fifth LGA /Sport England Sport Leadership Academy, attended by 15 portfolio holders and secured agreement from Arts Council England to work in partnership with us to deliver two Cultural Services Leadership Academies for up to 30 Portfolio Holders to attend.
- On Friday 19 July the LGA will host the second event for participants of the [Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme](#). Launched in early 2012, the programme works with 54 councils and is now at its half-way point in finding new, pragmatic and aspirational approaches to achieving savings and improving productivity in adult social care budgets.

Part 3 – Our own efficiency and effectiveness

Resources

1. The staff consultation on the current restructure in response to the reduction in RSG topslice closed on 24 June. We received 36 responses, including the formal Unison response. The final structure, reflecting a number of those responses has now been published. In total we received 23 requests for voluntary redundancy, of which 18 have been approved and a further 2 pending. This brings the number of compulsory redundancies to 17, although some staff may be suitable for redeployment into vacant posts. The majority of interviews for contested posts in the new organisation will take place from 16 to 25 July. A full update will be provided to members in September.
2. Work to secure a partner for the Knowledge Hub has advanced quickly. A separate report is included on this agenda.

Membership

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

Appendix 1 – Planned visits to member councils

2013		
22 July	Tendring District Council	Michael Coughlin
22 July	Suffolk CC and surrounding districts	Carolyn Downs
08 August	London Borough of Ealing	Sir Merrick Cockell
23 August / 6 September	London Borough of Havering – Rainham and Rainham Riverside	Sir Merrick Cockell
August TBC	Cannock Chase	Michael Coughlin
6 September	HIOW Chief Executives Meeting	Michael Coughlin
12 September	Warwickshire Chief Executives Meeting	Michael Coughlin
16 September	Bournemouth Borough Council	Sir Merrick Cockell
18 September	North West Councils Chief Executives Meeting	Carolyn Downs
20 September	Copeland / Barrow / Allerdale	Sir Merrick Cockell
30 September	Oxford City Council	Carolyn Downs
September TBC	Southampton	Michael Coughlin
September TBC	Liverpool City Council	Sir Merrick Cockell and Carolyn Downs
22 October	South West Councils Chief Executives Meeting	Carolyn Downs
October TBC	Doncaster	Sir Merrick Cockell
TBC	Rushcliffe BC and Nottingham City Council	Carolyn Downs
TBC	Norwich City Council and Counties	Carolyn Downs
TBC	Rotherham MBC	Carolyn Downs
TBC	Hartlepool	Carolyn Downs