

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LGA Leadership Board

Date and Time: 13 February 2013

Venue: Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2

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	Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Robert Light	Kirklees Council
Deputy-chairman	Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage BC
Deputy-chairman	Mehboob Khan	Kirklees Council
Deputy-chairman	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC

Apologies:

Deputy-chairman	Robert Gordon CBE DL	Hertfordshire CC
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Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman, welcomed Cllr Peter Box, Chair of the LGA Economy and Transport Board to the meeting for the first item.

1. HS2 - Discussion

The Chairman welcomed David Prout, Director General and Alison Munro, CEO, HS2 Ltd, who presented to the Board on the latest HS2 issues, including the planned phase 2 route.

Councillor Peter Box, Chair of the Economy and Transport Board briefly outlined the Board's position in relation to HS2. The differing impacts across the country meant that there was no consensus amongst members and the Board had asked for local government to be represented at DFT meeting by up to four councils that could set out the range of views on HS2. This had been rejected by ministers.

Members raised a number of issues, including

- The cost benefit of HS2 compared to other parts of the network.
- The need for more work to be done to demonstrate the long term benefits of HS2 and growth prospects for the north.
- Concern that the HS2 Bill going through parliament would not take planning powers away from Local Authorities

- That journey time was a less important issue to the public than punctual and reliable trains.
- Concerns about the chronic lack of investment in the current infrastructure
- The need for affordable tickets prices

David reassured members that the Government was keen to engage on a case by case basis with councils and that the funding of HS2 would not divert money to be invested in other parts of the network. The Secretary of State had given assurances that HS2 would not be prohibitively expensive and would be subject to the same process of ticket price banding as the current network.

Following a request from the Chairman, David Prout agreed to investigate with parliamentary colleagues a way for LGA members to properly engage with the HS2 process and to reconsider the Economy and Transport Board's formal request outlined by Councillor Box.

The Chairman thanked David Prout and Alison Munro for attending.

Decision

The Leadership Board **noted** the presentation.

2. **New Model for Local Government – Programme Plan**

Daniel Goodwin, LGA Executive Director, Finance & Policy introduced the report and tabled an updated project plan. Board panel chairs had now received copies of the New Model for Local Government proposal and a more detailed discussion of policy papers was scheduled for the March Leadership Board. A series of "deep dives" had been organised alongside the roadshows.

Members emphasised that the most robust debate on manifestos would take place in party meetings. The debate on the New Model for Local Government was an opportunity to influence the manifesto process, and there was broad support for the view that in order to be successful we needed to present some more radical proposals.

Members advocated engaging the support of other organisations with greater influence with Government than the LGA in specific areas.

Daniel confirmed that the intention was to agree broad principles rather than a detailed approach. There would continue to be political differences in how each party developed those principles.

A further report would be brought to Leadership Board in March.

Decision

Members **agreed** the proposed future actions.

Action

Members agreed for the proposed actions to be taken forward by officers. **LGA Officers**

New Model for Local Government to be included as an item on the March **LGA Officers** Leadership Board agenda.

3. **The Future Role of Councillors**

Joe Simpson, LGA Principal Strategic Advisor presented the Board with the recommendations of DCLG Select Committee's report to refresh the LGA's offer to councillors and the 'Be a Councillor' campaign.

Members commented that whilst the Be a Councillor campaign had improved induction for new Councillors, there was a gap in the induction process for Group Leaders. Joe agreed to look at the specific training needs of this group in more detail.

Members voiced their concern over the negative way that the report that had been presented in some parts of the media and highlighted the potential damage that this could do to local government's ability to attract more, especially young people to become councillors.

Members advocated closer working with youth councils, and seeking to secure their endorsement of the report and its proposals.

Decision

*The Leadership **agreed** the proposals outlined in the report.*

Actions

Officers to take forward member comments on the induction process for Group Leaders and seek endorsement from youth councils.

Joe Simpson

4. **Members' Pensions**

Claire Holloway, LGA Head of Corporate Governance introduced a report setting out the current position on members' pensions, including analysis of take up by councils and councillors across England and Wales, potential future approaches and an initial legal view.

Claire reported that latest intelligence was that the consultation on members' pensions would be published at the end of the month.

Members highlighted that access to a pension was a factor in attracting a broad cross-section of people – including young people – to become councillors. They unanimously supported option 1 – that all councillors should continue to have access to the pension scheme. They agreed to revisit the issue once the outcome of the consultation, and government's response to it, were known.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the report and **agreed** unanimously to continue to support access to the pension scheme for all councillors.*

5. Local Authority Bonds

Cllr Edward Lord sought the Leadership Board's approval for the recommendations set out in the report to progress the case, agreed by the February 2012 meeting of the LGA Executive, for establishing a collective bonds agency to provide lending at lower than Public Works Loan Board rates.

Decision

The Leadership Board **agreed** that the LGA:

- *includes this issue in its pre-budget lobbying and convey the message that local and central government should develop a joint agency; and*
- *proceed to instruct Local Partnerships to set out structures showing what a joint local-central agency might look like to form part of that proposal to government.*

Action

Cllr Lord / LGA Officers to progress as directed and meet with ministers in the forthcoming weeks.

Cllr Lord /LGA Officers

6. Sustainable Communities Act – Role of Selector

John Wright, LGA Senior Advisor, introduced the paper which recommends an LGA response to the proposal by DCLG to give SC Act powers to town and parish councils, to enable them to submit proposals direct to government. John outlined the views of Councillor Keith Mitchell CBE, chairman of the Selector Panel.

Members discussed the options and agreed that the possibility within option 2 of town and parish councils putting forward proposals which conflicted with the views of the LGA's member councils represented a strong potential for direct conflict of interest. The Option 3 compromise - offering to continue as Selector for resubmissions from principal councils only - was seen as the best way forward.

Decision

The Board **agreed** to continue to pursue option 3.

Action

LGA Officers to draft a response for the Chairman of the Selector Panel to send to the Minister, incorporating the Board's comments.

John Wright

7. LGA Perceptions Survey 2012

David Holdstock, LGA Director of Communications summarised the results of the LGA perceptions survey, highlighting in particular the need to continue to work to engage backbenchers with the LGA's work.

David outlined some potential quick wins, such as increasing members' awareness of the policy bulletins and the information these contain. He said that the communications team is currently working with a panel of members to trial some new measures, including a broader and less detailed update on the LGA's work for members who are not deeply engaged with any one policy area in particular.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the report and **agreed** the actions outlined.*

8. Update on the Joint Strategic Partnership Board

Cllr Mehboob Khan, Chair of the Safer, Stronger Communities Board, updated the Leadership Board on the LGA's work in establishing a Joint Strategic Partnership Board with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Cllr Khan said that PCCs had expressed an interest in accessing the LGA's political group offices and asked the Leadership Board to consider whether a membership offer with the LGA was appropriate in these circumstances.

Members agreed that the LGA group offices be as helpful as possible in assisting with PCC's enquiries but that any decisions on a more formal offer should be deferred for the next few months.

Members highlighted the need to be aware of sensitivities between member authorities and PCCs in some areas, and the importance of ensuring that any arrangement reached with PCCs in future does not undermine any existing membership arrangement with other groupings of authorities.

As part of the engagement process with PCCs, Cllr Khan reported that the Safer Communities Board had agreed to invite PCCs to comment on the LGA's response to policy consultations affecting them.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the update.*

9. Review of LGA Events Programme Activity

David Holdstock, Director of Communications, and Amanda Cowen, Head of Events, summarised the LGA's current events and conference offer and sought members' views on forthcoming LGA Annual conference locations.

In response to a question from members, David and Amanda said that a small number of events had been arranged on behalf of, or in partnership with, other organisations whilst following the Leadership Board's earlier steer to prioritise LGA events.

Members noted the LGA Annual Conference venues for 2013-2015. Councillor David Sparks raised strong concerns about the suitability of a specific venue as he believed that the

Executive had previously agreed that this venue should not be used. Officers agreed to investigate his concern and the current contract position.

Decision

Members **agreed** for the following locations for LGA annual conference in 2016 and 2017:

2016 – Bournemouth
2017 – Manchester

Actions

Officers to progress bookings for the 2016 and 2017 venues.

Amanda Cowen

10. LGA Executive agenda

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the Executive agenda for the following day.*

11. LGA Forward Plan

The Leadership Board received a revised draft forward plan for the Board, the Executive and the Councillors' Forum, and agreed that the item on the Danish Model of Community Budgets should be presented to the Executive in March 2013.

12. Note of the last meeting – 9 January 2013

Decision

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

FOR INFORMATION

13. Chief Executive's Report – February 2013

Carolyn Downs, LGA Chief Executive introduced this report. She highlighted that since writing, the number of councils on notice had reduced to 11 councils due in part to the Leadership Board's decision to introduce a loyalty bonus.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the Chief Executive's report for February 2013.*

14. LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition 2013

Roberta Henry, LGA Senior Events Organiser updated the Leadership Board on the latest developments in booking speakers for the 2013 LGA Annual Conference. She said that over 250 bookings had already been taken.

Decision

*The Leadership Board **noted** the report.*

PART 2 –

CONFIDENTIAL

15. Community Budgets

The Leadership Board received an update on the current position in relation to Community Budgets