

Note of last LGA Executive meeting

Title:	LGA Executive
Date:	Thursday 20 March 2014
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
------	-----------------------	--------

Introductions and Farewells

The Chairman opened the meeting by noting the apologies that had been received and welcoming Cllr Keith Wakefield (Leeds City Council) to his first meeting of the LGA Executive as an LGA Deputy Chair of the Association.

It was noted that this would be Daniel Goodwin's last Executive meeting as he would be leaving the LGA at the end of the week. The Chairman thanked Daniel for his work during his time at the LGA, wished him well in any future endeavours and introduced Michael Lockwood who had been appointed Executive Director for Local Government Finance and Policy on an interim basis.

1 Better Care Fund and Care Bill: Update

Sally Burlington (Head of the Community Wellbeing Programme) introduced the report which provided an update on developments relating to the Better Care Fund and the Care Bill. In doing so, she drew attention to a number of key themes emerging from feedback to the local areas' Better Care Fund Plans, updated Members on the approval the Care Bill and highlighted a number of potential risks relating the pace of change.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of detailed comments, including:

- Members discussed the opportunities, as well as challenges, posed by the transformation and change process. Whilst working across boundaries to support neighboring authorities was advocated, a number of concerns were also raised. These included: the ability of the sector to meet the speed of change in terms of capacity, skills and infrastructure; how the costs of implementing the Care Bill would be funded; the accountability of NHS England; the complexity of the integrated health model for two tier areas; and the need to ensure that financial savings are

Item Decisions and actions

Action

equitably distrusted between health and local government partners.

- Cllr Hodge, Chairman of the County Council's Network (CCN), drew attention to the findings of a CCN publication - '*Counties and the Care Bill*' - which included several recommendations that reinforce the LGA's key messages. Copies of the publication were available upon request.
- Members shared experiences from their localities of engagement with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) and the Acute Sector. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential overspend of, and engagement with, the Acute Sector. This was particularly complex for authorities where Acute Services were outside of the council's geographical boundaries.
- It was suggested that that LGA may wish to look at developing a '*key facts*' document for councillors leading on Adult Services to enable them to effectively support, facilitate and scrutinise the change process.
- Members queried what support was being provided to those local areas which were yet to submit their Better Care Plans.

Decision

That the Executive noted the current position on the Better Care Fund and endorsed the work being undertaken by the LGA on behalf of the sector.

2 Housing Reviews

Cllr Mike Jones, Environment and Housing Board Chairman, updated Members on LGA engagement with two housing reviews; one Government commissioned, and one initiated by the Labour Party. He outlined the LGA's key messages which had been further developed by an Environment and Housing Board workshop the previous day, and set out the proposed next steps to seek to influence both reviews.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Members endorsed the proposal to engage with both reviews, seeing it as a critical opportunity to shape the debate around housing supply and growth. There was a unified view that the LGA's submission should make a robust case that if given greater freedoms and powers, councils could transform communities through attracting and supporting housing supply that would meet local need, provide local jobs and drive local economies.
- In debating how to meet housing demand and encourage affordable rents within the housing market, a number of potential

Item Decisions and actions

Action

options were discussed. These included: continuing to lobby government to remove the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap; incentivising residents to downsize where appropriate to their needs; exploring potential options around vacant NHS land; improving existing social housing stock; and exploring innovative and sustainable approaches to housing supply, bespoke to local areas and based on a mix of tenures.

- Members were keen that the LGA's response emphasise that the planning system is not the major barrier to housing development, whilst simultaneously highlight the inevitable impact of increasing financial pressures on the capacity of councils' planning departments going forward.
- In discussing the differences between Local Enterprise Partnerships' (LEP) growth driven development targets, and local authorities' needs based targets, Members voiced concerns that these differing drivers could result in LEP strategies which were unrealistic and inconsistent with local authority development plans.

Decisions

The Executive:

- i. endorsed the proposed next steps to influence the two housing reviews; and
- ii. asked that their views inform the LGA's submissions to these reviews.

3 Extreme Weather: From Response to Recovery

Cllr Mike Jones introduced the report which provided an update on the current situation and the state of response and recovery to recent extreme weather events. He drew attention to groundwater flooding which remained an issue, and highlighted the need to properly understand the cumulative impacts on residents, businesses and communities.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Cllr Flick Rea MBE (Chair of the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board) offered support in ascertaining the financial impact of flooding on business within the Culture and Tourism industry.
- In discussing the Partnership Funding model, Members highlighted a number of positive schemes where local authorities had used their own funds to leverage Environment Agency funding. However, concerns were expressed that with increasing funding pressure, councils' ability to continue to do so would be constrained going forward.

Item Decisions and actions

Action

- A number of diverging views were expressed regarding the current formula for prioritising flood defence funding and if it should be reviewed. In relation to the balance between protecting rural and urban areas, the need for a more diverse range of priorities in order to reflect the needs of small and dispersed communities was noted, in addition to steps to improvement rural land management.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the maintenance of current flood defence schemes, as well as the significant number of draft schemes with the Environment Agency yet to be approved. Members highlighted the need for a review of flood management requirements and funding, with a view to starting an honest and realistic debate.
- The success of local intelligence and local decision making in enabling partners on the ground to swiftly and effectively respond to the demands of the crisis was commended, with particular reference to the efforts of local councils and fire and rescue authorities. However, Members supported the need for a thorough and challenging review to ensure that lessons were learnt from recent events.

Decision

The Executive agreed that the Finance Panel and the Environment and Housing Board take forward work on the strategic priorities for local government, with their successor bodies continuing this work from September 2014.

4 LGA Business Plan 2014/15

The Chairman briefly introduced the LGA's 2014/15 Business Plan which had been recommended for agreement by the Leadership Board.

The report was agreed without further comment.

Decision

The Executive agreed the LGA's Business Plan for 2014/15.

5 LGA Budget 2014/15

The Chairman briefly introduced the LGA's 2014/15 budget book which included the LGA's financial strategy for the next two years and proposals for the LGA's 2014/15 budget. The budget had been recommended for agreement by the Leadership Board.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
------	-----------------------	--------

The report was agreed without further comment.

Decision

The Executive agreed the LGA's Budget for 2014/15.

6 Note of the last Leadership Board meeting - Tabled

Decision

The Executive noted the minutes of the Leadership Board held on Wednesday 19 March.

7 Note of last LGA Executive meeting held on 20 February

Decision

The Executive agreed the minutes of the previous Executive meeting held on 20 February.

Exclusion and Press and Public

The press and public were excluded for the remainder of the meeting due to the consideration of confidential items.

8 Municipal Bonds Agency - Confidential

9 Strategic Partnership Agreements - Confidential

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/ Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Sir Merrick Cockell	RB Kensington & Chelsea
Vice-chairman	Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Vice-chairman	David Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC
Vice-chairman	Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City
Vice-chairman	Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Robert Light	Kirklees Council
Deputy-chairman	Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
Deputy-chairman	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC
Deputy-chairman	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham LB
Deputy-chairman	Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage BC
Deputy-chairman	Keith Wakefield	Leeds City
Members	Mayor Jules Pipe CBE	Hackney LB
	Chris White	St Albans DC

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
	Izzy Seccombe	Warwickshire CC
	Robert Dutton	Wrexham
	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
	Tony Jackson	East Herts DC
	David Hodge	Surrey CC
	John Merry	Salford City
	Paul Watson	Sunderland City
	Judith Blake	Leeds City
	Flick Rea	Camden LB
	Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
	Sue Murphy	Manchester City
	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
	Mike Jones	Cheshire West & Chester
	Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley MBC
	Clarence Barrett	Havering LB
	Peter Box CBE	Wakefield
	Jonatan Owen	East Riding
	John Hart	Devon CC
Apologies	Jim McMahon	Oldham
	Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City
	Katie Hall	Bath and NE Somerset DC
	Peter Reeve	Cambridge
	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City
	Stephen Parnaby OBE	East Riding
	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC