

## Note of last LGA Executive meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	LGA Executive
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 12 June 2014
<b>Venue:</b>	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  No declarations of interest were made.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b>  The Chairman congratulated those members that has been successfully re-elected in the recent local elections and congratulated Cllr Andrew Lewer who had been elected to the European Parliament.  Cllr David Sparks - Chair-elect of LGA - paid tribute to Sir Merrick Cockell for his leadership of the LGA during his tenure as Chairman. On behalf of the Executive he thanked the Chairman for his commitment and dedication to the role, which had helped drive the LGA forward to achieve significant successes.  Sir Merrick responded by wishing Cllr Sparks well in his future role as Leader of the LGA and expressed his gratitude for all the member and officer support he had received. He reflected on the changes to the LGA during his three years as Leader, with particular reference to the reputation and standing of the organisation outside of the sector and welcomed the shift in the relationship between local authorities and citizens which he hoped would continue to develop.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Congress of the Council of Europe Peer Review of Local Democracy in the UK</b>  Andreas Kiefer (Secretary General of Congress the Council of Europe) presented the findings of its recent peer review of local democracy in the UK. He noted that the UK was generally compliant with the Charter of Local Government, having made improvements since the last review in 1998. However, he drew attention to a number of areas where there was room for improvement. These included the financial resources of local	

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authorities in England; the lack of recognition in law of the right to local self-government; limitations on local authorities in managing local affairs due to central government interventions; and the standing of the role of councillor as a profession. He expressed disappointment at the Department for Communities and Local Government's rejection of the report's recommendations and offered Congress's help in starting a dialogue with Government.

Cllr John Warmisham (Congress UK Delegation Leader) welcomed the report's findings and its unanimous cross party support from the UK and other LGA delegations to Congress. He echoed Andreas Kiefer's disappointment at the Government's reaction to the report and the Minister's lack of meaningful engagement with the UK delegation at the Plenary Session. He asked the LGA to feed the report's recommendations into discussions with Government and political parties as they develop policies for 2015.

Cllr Clarence Barrett summarised the views of the European and International Board, highlighting that there had been cross-party consensus on all key points.

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

- Members welcomed the report's recommendations which provided independent, objective and Pan-European support to many of the principles of the LGA's *Rewiring* campaign. They too expressed disappointment at the Government's opposition to report's findings that there are some areas in need of improvement.
- In particular, Members highlighted the importance of: the role of councillors as full time community leaders within the context of the removal of councillors' right to be part of the local government pension scheme; and concerns about the financial resources of English local authorities. It was suggested that the report be used to strengthen the case for devolving further powers to councils to coordinate other services at a local level.
- In discussing next steps, there was united support for pursuing the report's recommendations with Government and political parties to influence policy making for manifestoes. To this end it was suggested that each political Group send the report formally to front-bench teams as well as sending it to the Chair of the DCLG Select Committee for investigation.
- In terms of Wales, it was noted that the report highlighted room for improvement in the Welsh Government's approach to

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regulatory impact assessments and assessing the impact of new responsibilities on councils.

- With reference to the reduction in administrative burdens on councils following the abolition of Audit Commission, Member emphasised the importance that the sector continue to robustly make the case in the run up to the 2015 Parliamentary elections for limiting the inspection burdens on councils.

**Decisions**

The Executive **agreed** that:

- i. each Political Group formally send the report to front-bench teams, asking for a considered response regarding how international benchmarks are achieved in the UK; and
- ii. the report be sent to Chair of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Select Committee for investigation.

**4 Domestic Violence**

Cllr Ann Lucas OBE (Safer & Stronger Communities Chair) introduced the report which outlined the current policy and financial context in which councils are tackling domestic violence (DV). She drew particular attention to the positive work of councils in supporting victims within financial constraints and commended the actions outlined in paragraph 16 to support local authorities further in this work.

Alongside Bethan Page-Jones from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Cllr Lucas highlighted the findings from two recent reports, one by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) and one by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) into how responses to domestic violence could be improved.

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

- There was full cross party support for the two reports and their findings. With reference to the insidious nature of domestic violence and its impact on individuals, communities and the public purse, Members welcomed the fact that addressing domestic violence was high on the political agenda and highlighted their role in keeping it visible.

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- Whilst important steps had been taken to change how domestic violence is addressed there was still room for significant improvement. Particular reference was made to the role of the police, housing associations and Crown Prosecution Service in helping to create a joined up supportive system for victims, and the need to address non-traditional forms of domestic violence - such as intergenerational and female-male violence – as well as traditional forms.
- Members discussed the importance of sharing best practice and providing support to those areas not meeting these standards. Reference was made to the successful multi-agency approach in areas such as Northumberland, Surrey and West Yorkshire.
- The Executive discussed the need to embed a culture of zero tolerance to domestic violence within society. Suggestions included: Local DV Champions and Charters; school education programmes; and outlining the financial savings of a preventative approach. Members welcomed the proposal to produce guides for overview and scrutiny committees and police and crime panels.
- Members' discussed the impact of domestic violence on children and young people and the need to provide appropriate support. They highlighted the importance of addressing female genital mutilation and ensuring that the new 'Cinderella law' effectively targets perpetrators of abuse.

**Decision**

The Executive:

- i. noted the current context of the local approach to tackling domestic violence;
- ii. agreed the actions outlined in paragraph 16; and
- iii. asked that their views inform how the LGA supports local authorities in addressing domestic violence.

**5 LGA Constitution**

The Chairman briefly introduced the report which commended a series of amendments to the LGA Constitution to be submitted to General Assembly for approval on 8 July 2014.

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	<p>The report was agreed without further comment.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed the amendments to the LGA Constitution and political conventions and commended them to the General Assembly.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Local Elections and LGA Political Balance 2014-2015: For information - Tabled</b></p> <p>The Chairman briefly introduced the tabled report setting out the revised proportionality of the LGA following the local elections on 22 May and the implications for the distribution of seats amongst the political groups on the LGA's governance structures.</p> <p>The report was noted without further comment.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The Executive noted the revised proportionality figures for 2014/2015.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Note of the last Leadership Board meeting on 11 May - Tabled</b></p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The Executive noted the minutes of the Leadership Board held on Wednesday 11 June.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Note of last LGA Executive meeting on 10 April</b></p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed the minutes of the previous Executive meeting held on 10 April.</p> <p><b>Exclusion of press and public</b></p> <p>The press and public were excluded for the remainder of the meeting due to the consideration of confidential items.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Our Ambition for Children and Young People</b></p>	

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**10 The First 100 Days - Tabled**

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
	Cllr Sir Merrick Cockell (Chairman)	Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council
	Cllr Gary Porter (Vice Chairman)	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Robert Light (Deputy Chairman)	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
	Cllr David Sparks OBE (Vice Chairman)	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock (Deputy Chairman)	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Vice Chairman)	Portsmouth City Council
	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE (Deputy Chairman)	Watford Borough Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice Chairman)	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr David Simmonds	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr David Hodge	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Jim McMahon	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
	Cllr Mrs Ann Lucas OBE	Coventry City Council
	Cllr Katie Hall	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Clarence Barrett	Havering London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Reeve	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Tony Jackson	East of England LGA (East Herts DC)
	Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE	South East England Councils (Tandridge DC)
	Cllr Mrs Izzi Seccombe	Centre for Local Government West Midlands (Warwickshire County Council)
	Cllr John Hart	South West Councils (Devon County Council)
	Mayor Jules Pipe	London Councils (Hackney London Borough Council)
	Cllr Paul Watson	Association of North East Councils (Sunderland City Council)
	Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (East Riding and Yorkshire)
	Cllr David Phillips	Welsh LGA (Swansea City and County Council)
	Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Special Interest Group of Municipal

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Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Authorities (Barnsley Council) District Councils Network SIG (Rushcliffe Borough Council) County Councils Network SIG (Gloucestershire County Council)
Andreas Kiefer	Cllr John Warmisham	Salford City Council
Apologies:	Cllr Andrew Lewer MBE Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE Cllr Keith Wakefield Sir Richard Leese CBE Cllr Flick Rea MBE Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Derbyshire County Council Stevenage Borough Council Leeds City Council People & Places Board Camden Council East Midlands Councils (Lincolnshire County Council)
	Alderman Sir David Wootton	Local Partnerships (City of London)