

Note of last LGA Leadership Board meeting (Confidential)

Title: LGA Leadership Board
Date: Wednesday 15 July 2015
Venue: Smith Square 1&2, Ground 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
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1 Declarations of Interest and Apologies

No declarations were made.

Apologies were received from Cllrs: David Simmonds CBE; Philippa Roe; Mayor Sir Steve Bullock; Nick Forbes; Anne Western; and Gerald Vernon-Jackson.

2 Congratulations

The Chairman opened the meeting by congratulating all members on their appointment to the Leadership Board for the 2015/16 meeting cycle.

3 Layden House Refurbishment (confidential)

Huw Lewis (City of London) briefly introduced the item, which detailed recommendations regarding Layden House.

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed the recommendations of the Local Government Management Board.

Huw Lewis (City of London) briefly introduced the item, which detailed the outcomes and recommendations for the refurbishment of Layden House following a feasibility study. Jason Martin (Hawkins Brown Architects) presented three development options: (1) original base scheme, with the addition of recladding plus a single storey sixth floor extension to north side and roof garden; (2) additional extension into Turks Yard; and (3) additional extension to sixth floor south side.

In the detailed discussion that followed, a number of comments and questions were raised, including:

- Members questioned the financial assumptions behind each option and the impact of the various components, including the roof terrace, facade replacement and length of void period.
- Members sought clarity on the LGA's financial position and ability to invest, emphasised the need for strong political accountability and oversight, and

welcomed synergies between the Layden House and Local Government House developments.

- With reference to local authorities with experience of similar commercial developments, a Member suggested that the LGA use intelligence from within the sector.
- In response to a number of technical questions on the design and building specification, the extension in Turks Head Yard and the rationale for sequencing the application for planning permissions, Huw Lewis assured the Board that the proposed approach was based on maximising the lettable area and rental income, minimising undue investment and delivering high quality design.

Decisions

The Leadership Board agreed to:

- i. adopt option 1 as the core scheme for Layden House - including recladding and a single storey extension on 5th floor north side - and to proceed with technical design and full planning application;
- ii. progress option 2 – the additional extension in Turk’s Head Yard – to pre-application stage (cost £30,000), subject to a final decision on whether to proceed in October 2015; and
- iii. defer option 3 – single storey extension on 5th floor south side – at this stage but to review once planning consents for options 1 and 2 are complete.

Action

Officers to instruct the consultancy team to proceed. **(Claire Holloway.)**

4 Local Government House Refurbishment (confidential)

Huw Lewis briefly introduced the report which updated on progress in relation to Local Government House.

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed the recommendations as outlined in the report. Huw Lewis briefly introduced the report which updated on progress in relation to the refurbishment of Local Government House and sought agreement to a provisional budget of £6 million.

The report was agreed without further comment.

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed a provisional budget of £6 million for the refurbishment of Local Government House, subject to detailed options and cost being developed in the feasibility reports.

Action

Officers to commission feasibility reports for the refurbishment of Local Government House. **(Claire Holloway)**

5 Note of the last meeting (confidential)

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2015.

6 Priority Commissions from the Leadership Board (confidential)

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) introduced the item which sought Members' initial steer on the priority work to be commissioned by the Leadership Board for 2015-16.

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed the priority policy work areas for 2015-16 subject to the inclusion of the Board's comments.

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) introduced the item which sought Members' initial steer on the priority work to be commissioned by the Leadership Board for 2015-16.

In the discussion that followed, Members welcomed the Leadership Board undertaking a stronger commissioning role and endorsed the priority policy areas identified in the report, subject to inclusion of their comments as follows:

Devolution

- The devolution and the future shape of local government proposal was welcomed, however there was clear steer that external research commissioned should be solution-focused, with practical application.
- Members felt that the education and skills agenda should be included as an integral element of the devolution work.

School Places

- Long term planning for school places was highlighted as a key issue for the Children and Young People Board to take forward.

Housing

- There was strong support for creating a commission on housing, with a broad scope and pan-sector membership. Although keen for the commission to encompass cross cutting issues and regional dimensions, the Board emphasised the importance that housing remain the central focus.
- The Board felt that planning was best progressed through the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, rather than through the housing commission.
- Whilst house building was acknowledged as a national priority, a Member emphasised the need for a greater focus on affordable housing and the role of local councils in representing the views of communities and protecting open spaces.

Local government finance

- There was a divergence of views regarding finance; with some members in favour of the proposals as outlined, whilst other advocated for a more innovative and solution focused approach. Specific suggestions included exploring commercialisation and what freedoms and flexibilities would be required for a fully sustainable sector.

Economic development and infrastructure

- In discussing economic development and infrastructure, there was a general - although not unanimous - consensus that these issues were cross cutting and therefore would be part and parcel of the devolution and housing work.

Decisions

The Leadership Board agreed:

- i. the priority policy work areas for 2015-16, subject to: the inclusion of skills in the devolution work; the creation of a commission on housing; and inclusion of commercialisation and innovation within the finance work stream;
- ii. to review the Terms of Reference for the corporate commissions at the Leadership Board's October meeting;
- iii. to delegate responsibility for the remaining policy issues outside of the corporate commissions to the Boards;
- iv. recommend the Children and Young People's Board undertake work on long term future schools place planning; and
- v. recommend the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board undertake work on planning.

Action

Officer, in conjunction with Board Lead Members, to progress priority policy work areas in line with the Leadership Board's steer. **(Ian Hughes and Sally Burlington)**

7 Universal Credit: Housing Design and Colocation (confidential)

Ian Hughes (Head of Place Policy) introduced the report which updated on the future of housing design and the implications for housing benefit staff.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board endorsed the steps as outlined in the report.

Action

LGA officers to progress in line with Leadership Board's direction.

Ian Hughes (Head of Place Policy) introduced the report which updated on discussions with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on the future of housing design and the implications for housing benefit staff. The Board's steer was sought to help shape the future direction of LGA work in this area.

With reference to the impact of the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) on councils, a Member emphasised the need to develop a strong evidence base and to robustly make the case for no new burdens. In response, Carolyn Downs assured members that such steps had already been taken, and provided further details on the activities previously undertaken by the LGA regarding SFIS.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board:

- i. endorsed LGA officers to confirm numbers around housing benefit staff costs with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); and
- ii. confirmed its support for officers to identify a colocation programme.

Action

LGA officers to progress in line with Leadership Board's direction.

8 Transfer of 4Ps Company to Local Partnerships (confidential)

The Chairman moved the report regarding 4Ps (the predecessor to Local Partnerships).

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed the recommendations as outlined in the report.

9 Appointment of Directors to UK Municipal Bonds Agency (confidential)

The Chairman moved the report regarding appointments to the Local Capital Finance Company.

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed the recommendations as outlined in the report.

The Chairman moved the report which sought confirmation that the Leadership Board would not exercise its right of veto in relation to the three proposed appointments to the Local Capital Finance Company.

The report was agreed without further comment.

Decisions

The Leadership Board:

1. agreed not to exercise its right of veto in relation to the appointment of the three proposed Directors to the Board of UK Municipal Bonds Agency, subject to the appointment of a Councillor during the summer; and
2. delegated the decision in relation to the Councillor appointment to the LGA Chairman, Group Leaders and Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive.

Action

Respond to the Chairman of the UK Municipal Bonds Agency. **(Claire Holloway)**

10 July 2015 Budget

Stephen Hughes (Executive Director) introduced the report which summarised the key issues in the Chancellor's Emergency Budget on 8 July with implications for local government and projected the funding position for councils as a result of the changes through the LGA's Future Funding Outlook.

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

- Serious concerns were expressed regarding the financial and administrative burden on councils as a result of the differential rate "Pay to Stay" proposal for social housing tenants with household incomes above specified limits.
- Members asked that the an exercise be undertaken to profile the implications for

local government of the raft of housing changes, with a view to providing a robust evidence base to Government.

- With reference to the wide-ranging review of business rates, Members highlighted the opportunity to influence Government on issues such as business rates revaluation and council tax increase limit, and advocated for adopting a pragmatic approach.
- In response to a question regarding wind energy development, officers agreed to clarify if there had been any recent Ministerial announcements.

Decision

The Leadership Board noted the update.

Actions

Profile the implications for local government of the raft of housing changes.

(Stephen Hughes / Ian Hughes).

Clarify Government announcements regarding renewable energy. **(Stephen Hughes)**

11 Membership and Terms of Reference 2015/16

The Chairman moved the report which asked the Board to note its Membership and Terms of Reference for 2015/16.

A Member asked for a terminological amendment, so that the reference to 'Whitehall' be amended to 'Civil Service'.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board noted its Membership and Terms of Reference for 2015/2016, and agreed to amend the 'Whitehall' reference to 'Civil Service'.

Action

Update the Leadership Board's Terms of Reference.

(Frances Marshall)

12 Dates of Meetings 2015/16

The Chairman moved the dates of meetings of the LGA Executive, Councillors' Forum and Leadership Board in 2015/16 without further comment.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board noted the dates of meetings of the LGA Executive, Councillors' Forum and Leadership Board in 2015/16.

13 Full Year Performance Report: April 2014 - March 2015

The Chairman moved the LGA's performance report for the year without further comment.

Decision

The Leadership Board reviewed the performance report for 2014-15.

14 Communications Annual Report: April 2014 to March 2015

David Holdstock (Director of Communications) introduced the report which set out the LGA's communications activity for April 2014 to March 2015. In doing so, he drew attention to a number of areas which had been progressed as a result of the Board's direction the previous year.

- Members commended the LGA's communication activity and questioned how to better link the positive impact of the LGA's media work to membership satisfaction levels.
- With reference to the relatively small number of members that had fronted LGA media work in the past year, there was collective agreement that the number of board chairman doing media interviews should increase. The Board agreed that group leaders and board chairman should be asked for a list of media training undertaken and subject areas for which they have expertise in.
- In circumstances where a cross party LGA line could not be reached, the current media protocol for groups to provide their own media statements should be adopted.

Decisions

The Leadership Board:

- i. noted the communications activity for the period April 2014 to March 2015;
- ii. agreed that the number of leading members undertaking media interviews should be broadened and that all group leaders and board chairman should be asked to provide a list of key areas they have expertise in.
- iii. agreed that where political census could not be reached, the current media protocol should be used, giving the four LGA Political Group Offices the option for individual comment.

Action

Group leaders and board chairmen to be asked to provide details of media training undertaken and subject areas for which they have expertise. **(David Holdstock)**

15 LGA Perceptions Survey 2014/15

David Holdstock introduced the report which set out the results of the 2014/15 perceptions survey. In doing so, he drew Members attention to the upward trend in satisfaction levels as well as highlighting areas in which further work could be undertaken.

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

- Members discussed methods to improve response rates and agreed that the survey continue to be conducted on an annual basis.
- With reference to the success of *First* magazine as key vehicle of communication, Members discussed ways to make the publication more interactive and improve the profile of *First* online. It was suggested that each edition invite members' views on a certain topic to be featured in the following publication.
- With reference to awareness of what LGA membership means for individual authorities, it was noted that membership briefings are circulated by the Group Offices to all elected members, as well as to Chief Executives and Leaders.
- Members noted the awareness and satisfaction levels pertaining to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and Local Partnerships (LP) given that both bodies receive Revenue Support Grant (RSG) funding.

Decisions

The Leadership Board:

- i. noted the results of the 2014/15 perceptions survey; and
- ii. agreed the headline principles of the revised action plan for 2015/16.

16 LGA Governance

The Chairman introduced the item which sought agreement to pilot a new portfolio and forum governance model for Resources and Community Wellbeing from 1 September, with a review after six months.

The report was agreed without further comment.

Decisions

The Leadership Board:

- i. agreed to pilot the new portfolio holder governance model for Resources and Community Wellbeing from September 2015; and
- ii. invited the Governance Task Group to monitor progress of the new model and to report back to Leadership Board in April 2016.

Action

Officers to progress the pilots in consultation with portfolio holders. **(Ian Hughes, Sally Burlington, Frances Marshall)**

17 Leadership Board Review of the Year

The Chairman moved the report which summarised the work of the Leadership Board from 1 September to date, outlined its main achievements, and invited Members' views on areas for improvement.

Members emphasised the importance that criteria for success be put in place to enable meaningful evaluation of outcomes.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board reviewed its work over the past year and considered lessons learned.

Action

Agree criteria to measure outcome. **(Claire Holloway)**

18 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) - 2015 Annual Reports

Carolyn Downs introduced the report which invited Members to review the annual reports of the LGA's Special Interest Groups (SIGs). In doing so, she made reference to recent difficulties experienced with a particular SIG and suggested the Board consider what relationship they would like with SIGs going forward.

Members discussed the mechanisms in place to ensure that SIGs operate within their remit as defined by the LGA and asked that future annual reports be limited to one page in length, with a clear focus on achievements.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board:

- i. noted the annual reports of the LGA's Special Interest Groups; and
- ii. agreed to receive shorter, outcome focused annual reports from each Special Interest Group in future.

Action

Revise the format and focus of Special Interest Groups' annual reports in line with the Board's steer. **(Frances Marshall)**

19 Chief Executive's Monthly Report: May-July 2015

Carolyn Downs introduced the report which set out the LGA's main achievements against the Business Plan priorities. In doing so, she highlighted Government's willingness to include provisions to enable data sharing between Clinical Commissioning Groups and local authorities within the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill.

The Board expressed their cross party support for legislating to enable data sharing that would facilitate health and social care integration, and highlighted the need for more integrated data sharing arrangement with all Government Departments.

Decision

The Leadership Board noted the Chief Executive's report for July 2015.

20 LGA Forward Plan

Carolyn Downs briefly introduced the report which sought Members' views on the future agendas of the LGA Leadership Board, LGA Executive and Councillors' Forum.

Members welcomed the Minister of State for Housing and Planning's request to attend Councillors' Forum in October and requested that the discussion should be broader than

Right to Buy.

Decision

The Leadership Board endorsed the Forward Plan.

21 Congratulations and thanks

On behalf of the Leadership Board, the Chairman expressed his gratitude to Carolyn Downs who would be leaving the LGA after four years as LGA Chief Executive. He congratulated her on being appointed to the London Borough of Brent as Chief Executive and thanked her for the commitment and dedication she had shown.

Carolyn Downs thanked the Leadership Board for their support during her tenure, noting that it had been a privilege to have undertaken the role.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Gary Porter	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Jim McMahon OBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr David Hodge	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire County Council
	MBE	
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Peter Reeve	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill	Watford Borough Council
	MBE	
Members		
Apologies	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Philippa Roe	Westminster City Council
	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Anne Western	Derbyshire County Council
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		