

## Note of last LGA Leadership Board meeting

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**Title:** LGA Leadership Board  
**Date:** Wednesday 21 October 2015  
**Venue:** Smith Square 1&2, Ground 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

#### 1 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

#### 2 Party Conferences 2015

Laurence Meehan (Head of Campaigns and External Communications) introduced the item which summarised the LGA's activities at the 2015 autumn party conferences. He drew particular attention to the positive profile the LGA had received through the 75 events that LGA members had spoken at and welcomed the Leadership Board's feedback.

Members made a number of detailed comments, to which officers responded, on issues including:

- Members commended the support they had received from the LGA staff and shared their experiences from their respective conferences, noting that the Independent Group conference, and those of its constituent groups, were still to take place.
- Devolution and housing emerged from members' feedback as common key themes across the political spectrum. Views over HS2 had been divided. A report recently published by the Smith Institute exploring the current challenges around social housing was highlighted by a Member as a helpful contribution to the housing debate.

#### Decision

The Leadership Board noted the report and commended the LGA's engagement with the Party conferences.

#### 3 2015 Spending Review Progress Update

Sarah Pickup (Deputy Chief Executive) introduced the item which outlined recent

developments in relation to the Government's Spending Review and the LGA's campaign to influence its contents. She drew particular attention to the LGA's engagement with Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and DCLG following the announcement that local government will retain 100% of business rates by 2020 and invited the Board's views on next steps.

Members made a number of detailed comments, to which Sarah Pickup responded, on issues including:

#### Business Rates

- Whilst welcoming the Chancellor's announcement in principle, Members acknowledged that the detail of the new arrangements would be critical in determining the implications for the sector.
- A commitment to properly fund demand-led cost pressures and new burdens resulting from Government policy was set out as a pre-requisite for negotiations with Government on the sector undertaking any additional responsibilities.
- Given the significance of the proposal for the future shape and financing of local government, Members emphasised the importance of the sector being able to co-design a new business rates system with Government within a realistic timeframe.
- Concerns were raised regarding the risk to the sector as a result of outstanding business rates appeals and local government representation on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

#### Syrian Refugee Resettlement

- The need to secure a public commitment from Government that the Syrian refugee resettlement costs be fully funded and protected from reductions in future years was emphasised.

#### Devolution Bill

- Members stressed the importance that the Devolution Bill passes onto the statute books in a form that supports the sector's devolutionary ambitions through providing a transparent and flexible national framework.

#### Housing

- Serious concerns were expressed regarding the financial implications for councils, as well as their ability to meet housing demand and supply, as a result of proposal in the Housing Bill and any potential reduction to the New Homes Bonus.

### **Decisions**

The Leadership Board **agreed**:

that its comments inform the LGA's work to shape the Government's Spending Review and other relevant policy positions; and  
that further work on the sector's role and asks in relation to future business rates retention be developed and submitted to Members at the earliest opportunity.

### **Action**

Officers to take forward work on the LGA Spending Review in line with Members' direction. **Sarah Pickup**

Officers to take forward negotiations with Government on Business Rates retention in line

with Members' direction and report back to the Board **Sarah Pickup**

#### **4 Policy Priorities**

The Chairman reminded Members that at the July meeting, the Leadership Board had asked for work to be undertaken on four cross cutting priorities. The relevant Board Chair/Portfolio Holder for these areas would report to Leadership Board on how this work is being progressed.

##### **a) Promoting Health and Wellbeing**

Cllr Izzi Seccombe (Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder) introduced the report which outlined the Community Wellbeing Portfolio's work on promoting health and wellbeing. She drew attention to the four key areas of focus - future vision for health and social care; funding for social care and support; the role of councils and place based leadership in promoting health and wellbeing; and vulnerable people and older people – and summarised how the Portfolio would take these themes forward.

Members made a number of comments, to which Cllr Seccombe and Sally Burlington (Head of Programmes) responded, on issues including:

- There was a strong feeling that any increase in care staff costs as a result of the National Living Wage needed to be recognised as a potential cost to local authorities but that reductions in corporation tax for providers should be taken into account. The market sustainability of certain job roles within the care sector was highlighted as at risk, with particular reference to mileage.
- It was suggested that the Public Health Outcome Framework be reviewed.
- Members shared examples from their localities of health and social care integration and discussed the need for equitable distribution of cost savings across all local partners.

##### **Decision**

The Leadership Board noted the work programme agreed by the Community Wellbeing Portfolio on promoting health and wellbeing.

##### **b) Housing and Planning**

Cllr Peter Box CBE introduced the report which outlined the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board's work programme on housing and planning. In doing so, he highlighted the intention to create a Housing Commission that would cover: house building; place shaping and community building; employment and social mobility; and health and an ageing population.

Members made a number of detailed points that were responded to by Cllr Box relating to issues including:

- There was cross party concern regarding the impact of the Housing Bill

on councils' ability to address the current housing shortage and to deliver the Government's housing growth objectives. Particular reference was made to the impact on the financial buoyancy of councils' Housing Revenue Accounts and their ability to fund housing and infrastructure development as a result of: the reduction of social rents by 1%; the exemption of Starter Homes from section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions; and the loss of affordable housing stock through the forced sale of high value council homes and extension of Right to Buy.

- Members welcomed the creation of the Housing Commission, noting the importance that it links in with the work of the Resources Portfolio. They suggested that it encompass issues beyond housing building, such as: private sector 'land banking' practices; housing demand and supply drivers; increasing prevalence of homelessness; the challenge of regional variation; supporting the development of balanced communities; and funding large infrastructure projects to support development at scale.
- Concerns were expressed over the potential impact of the voluntary agreement between the Government and the National Housing Federation (NHF) on the relations between Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and local authorities.
- There was support for a two pronged lobbying strategy.

#### **Decision**

The Leadership Board noted the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board's work on housing.

#### **Action**

Circulate the Savills Report to Leadership Board Members. **Eamon Lally/Frances Marshall**

## **5 LGA Forward Plan**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of the Leadership Board, LGA Executive and Councillors' Forum and asked for an update report on the Spending Review to be brought to the December Leadership Board.

#### **Decision**

The Leadership Board agreed the Forward Plan.

#### **Action**

Follow-up report to the Spending Review discussion to be submitted to 11 December Leadership Board meeting. **Sarah Pickup.**

## **6 LGA Business Plan and Performance Monitoring**

Claire Holloway (Head of Corporate Services) introduced the report which proposed moving to a high level rolling three-year business plan, supported by an annual work programme, with a streamlined performance reporting framework.

The report was agreed without further comment.

#### **Decision**

The Leadership Board agreed:

- i. to move to a 3-year rolling business plan;
- ii. roll forward the current 2015/16 business plan to September 2016, with the inclusion of “Promoting Health and Wellbeing” as an additional priority; and
- iii. the proposed performance monitoring framework.

#### **Action**

Submit revised Business Plan to the December meetings of the Leadership Board and Executive for agreement. **Claire Holloway**

### **7 Communications Update**

David Holdstock (Director of Communications) introduced the item which summarised communications activity between April and September 2015. In doing so, he noted that the LGA had exceeded its highest ever number of national media mentions for a single calendar month in September 2015.

Members asked officers to develop a proactive campaign to highlight the good work that councils, council staff and members do on behalf of local, residents.

Cllr David Simmonds (Improvement & Innovation Board Chairman) advised that the Improvement & Innovation Board was working with the LGA's communications team on a reputation campaign, as well as on building on the learning from the recent targeted *Be a Councillor* Campaign.

#### **Decision**

The LGA Leadership Board noted and commended the communications activity for the period April to September 2015.

### **8 LGA Executive Agenda**

#### **Decision**

The agenda for the LGA Executive meeting on 22 October was noted without further comment.

### **9 Chief Executive's Monthly Report**

Sarah Pickup (Deputy Chief Executive) moved the report without further comment.

#### **Decision**

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

### **10 Note of the last meeting on 16 September 2015**

#### **Decision**

The Leadership Board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 September 2015 as a correct record.

## 11 Note of the last Commercial Advisory Board meeting on 7 September 2015

### Decision

The Leadership Board noted the minutes of the previous Commercial Advisory Board held on 7 September.

## 12 LGA Membership Subscriptions

Claire Holloway (Head of Corporate Services) introduced the report which proposed three possible approaches to setting subscriptions for 2016/17 for Leadership Board's decision.

Members discussed the respective advantages and draw backs of the three approaches.

### Decision

The Leadership Board agreed that the basis for calculating subscriptions for 2016/17 should remain the same as the previous year.

## Appendix A -Attendance

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