

## Note of last LGA Executive meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	LGA Executive
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 22 October 2015
<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 were made.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Policy Priorities</b>	
	a) Housing and Planning	
	<p>Peter Box, Chair of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, introduced the report which set out the approach for the LGA's Housing Commission in the context of implications for councils of the government's recent housing proposals. Each lead member of the EEHT Board would hold an evidence gathering session at various locations around the country with a wide selection of stakeholders, which would feed into the Commission's final report. Members noted that this would be presented to the LGA General Assembly and Conference in 2016.</p> <p>In the discussion which followed Members made a number of comments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing is an area of particular concern currently given the potentially adverse effect on local business plans of the sale of council housing.</li><li>• Briefings for decision-makers should be held regularly throughout the life of the Commission, including further lobbying on the Housing Bill.</li><li>• The LGA already had a lot of evidence to support the Commission's work. However it would gather further evidence on the themes of house building, place shaping and community building, employment and social mobility, and health and the ageing population.</li><li>• Members of other LGA Boards should have the opportunity to</li></ul>	

feed into the work of the Commission, as much of the work was cross-cutting across multiple policy areas.

- The District Councils Network and County Councils Network should both be involved in the work of the Commission.
- The need for housing development to be supported by a properly planned infrastructure.
- The importance of the retention of social housing for communities across the country.
- The longer term issue of high rents should be considered, with a view to an eventual change in legislation. The Commission should compare private and local authority rented properties, as well as the higher costs of mortgages.
- Although there would be differences in regional priorities, it was important to have consensus across local government on housing issues.

#### **Decision**

The LGA Executive **agreed** the approach set out for the Housing Commission, and agreed to receive further updates on the ongoing work at a future meeting.

#### **Action**

Update report on the LGA Housing Commission to be considered at a future meeting.

#### b) 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 which the Portfolio would be focussing on and how these would be taken forward - the 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.

Cllr Seccombe highlighted that the new portfolio approach, which was more outwardly focussed with more meetings being held outside of London. She reported that a successful forum had taken place at the recent National Children and Adult Services conference in Bournemouth, where local leaders had been able to highlight particular areas of concern.

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

- The opportunity for joint working with the Culture Tourism and Sport Board, particularly in relation to participation in sport from an early age and the links with childhood obesity.
- The importance of extra care housing for older people and

people with learning disabilities, which was more cost effective in the long term and allowed people to keep their independence.

- Representatives of the Community Wellbeing Portfolio would continue to attend quarterly meetings with the NHS Clinical Commissioners, with a view to making Health and Wellbeing Boards a system leader.
- The importance of maintaining the LGA's involvement and good relations with the programme boards and work streams at the Department of Health..

#### **Decision**

The LGA Executive **noted** the work programme agreed by the Community Wellbeing Portfolio on promoting health and wellbeing.

### **3 Update on Refugee Position**

Sally Burlington, Head of Programmes, provided an update on the current position for local government on the government's decision to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees over the life of the parliament. She highlighted that the Home Office had announced that 1,000 refugees would be resettled before Christmas 2015, and were currently negotiating with local authorities the number to be taken by each locality. Offers for nearly all of the first 1,000 had been received, but there was still a lot of work to do on accommodation and support. Ongoing issues included:

- The LGA's Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group had secured a commitment from government that funding for each refugee would be available for five years, but would need to ensure that the whole scheme was fully funded in practice.
- Government funding would follow the person, so if a refugee moved to another local authority area their funding would be transferred.
- It was unclear if refugee families would be subject to the benefit cap. Clarity was required on the circumstances under which money would be paid above the benefit cap given the wide variation of housing and social care costs across the country.
- A national solution had been proposed for unaccompanied children, although there were not expected to be many under the Syrian scheme.
- The question of what would happen after five years was still not resolved.
- It was still unclear how the large number of offers of support from the voluntary sector and through community sponsorship would be managed.
- In order for local authorities to effectively plan for refugees in their area, early access to information on housing, health and social care needs would be required. There were currently ongoing negotiations on the most effective method for this.
- Local authorities had established lead Chief Executives, Directors of Adult Services and Directors of Children's Services, who could be

approached informally to enquire how many refugees their authorities would be willing to take.

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

- The need to continue negotiations with the government, in particular on the issue of fair distribution across the country and the benefits cap.
- Many councils were willing to take refugees but did not want to go public until particular issues had been clarified by the government.
- Given high levels of public and media interest, work on national and local communications was vital to explain councils' position and protect the reputation of local government.
- Other bodies outside local authorities were in a position to help house refugees, including the Church of England and various housing associations.
- Members shared examples from their localities of decisions taken on refugee resettlement.
- Members asked that Cllr David Simmonds and the LGA's Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group be formally thanked for their work on the Syrian refugee crisis.

**Decision**

The LGA Executive **noted** the update on the refugee resettlement process and that a further update would be provided at a future meeting.

**Action**

Cllr David Simmonds and the Asylum, Refugee and Migration Task Group be formally thanked for their work to date on behalf of local authorities.

**4 Note of the last Leadership Board meeting - Tabled**

**Decision**

The LGA Executive **noted** the minutes of the LGA Leadership Board held on 21 October 2015.

**5 Note of last LGA Executive meeting**

**Decision**

The LGA Executive **agreed** the minutes of the LGA Executive held on 17 September 2015.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
	Lord Gary Porter (Chairman)	South Holland District Council
	Cllr David Hodge (Vice Chairman)	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming (Deputy Chairman)	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee (Deputy Chairman)	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Jim McMahon OBE (Vice-Chair)	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice-Chair)	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Vice-Chair)	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council and Community Wellbeing Board
	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport
	Cllr Claire Kober OBE	Haringey LB and Resources Board
	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council and City Regions Board
	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Ian Stephens	Isle of Wight Council
	Cllr Peter Reeve	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford Borough Council
	Cllr Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr Nicolas Heslop	South East England Councils (SEEC)
	Cllr John Hart	South West Councils
	Cllr Martin Hill OBE	East Midlands Councils
	Cllr Roger Lawrence	West Midlands LGA
	Cllr Paul Watson	Association of North East Councils
	Mayor Jules Pipe	London Councils
	Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	SIGOMA
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	District Councils Network
Apologies:	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Philippa Roe	Westminster City Council
	Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
	Cllr Anne Western	Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Jason Ablewhite	East of England Local Government Association (EELGA)
	Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH)
	Cllr Barrie Grunewald	North West Regional Leaders Board
	Cllr Aaron Shotton	Welsh Local Government Assoc. (WLGA)
	Cllr Paul Carter CBE	County Councils Network (CCN)

10 December 2015

Alderman Sir David  
Wootton

Local Partnerships

In Attendance:

LGA Officers: