

Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date:	Thursday 3 March 2016
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
1	<p>Integration and Community Cohesion - Louise Casey will be present to speak on the review of how to boost opportunity and integration</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Members to Councillors' Forum. He also welcomed Louise Casey CB in her role leading a review into how to boost opportunity and integration in the most isolated and deprived communities.</p> <p>Louise praised local authorities for their contribution to the Troubled Families programme and highlighted the importance of strong local leadership in tackling entrenched social problems. Focussing on the review, Louise commented on the amount of time she has spent travelling the country speaking to local government, faith groups, schools and other organisations. She mentioned that replies to the review's call for evidence had been dominated by local government, which indicates how seriously they take these issues.</p> <p>Louise stated that the review's work will be based around three broad themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integration: this strand of the review will focus on segregation, whether that be through linguistic isolation, high levels of unemployment, or racial inequalities in the criminal justice system. In terms of solutions, Louise emphasised the need for local government input as each population is different and therefore these problems will require diverse local solutions. As a result, Louise reiterated that strong local leadership will be key.• Equality: this strand of the review will focus on gender equality, gay rights and the rule of law. Louise urged Members to defend these values in public without fear because civic leadership is crucial to ensuring that all parts of our society benefit from the realisation of these universal values.• Preventing harm to children: this strand of the review will focus on radicalisation, exploitation, and child abuse. Louise stated that, to tackle these problems, it is imperative that we build character and resilience in all children. She also highlighted that there is a	

national security element to this strand of the review. Louise emphasised that the first duty of public servants is to protect the vulnerable and urged Members not to worry about offending people in the process. Again, Louise highlighted strong local leadership as key to the success of this strategy.

Louise then spoke about her related work inspecting Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. She suggested that the central insight of the Rotherham report was that, although the denial of serious problems might seem like they serve community relations in the short-run, they will inevitably undermine community relations in the long-run by inhibiting justice and effective policing

The floor was opened up for questions:

- Members stressed the complexity of tragic incidents such as the Daniel Pelka murder where many different public bodies such as the police, schools and the local authority all missed early warning signs of abuse. They asked for Louise's insights into how progress can be made to avoid such events being repeated. In particular, members were keen to hear Louise's thoughts on how best to proceed when a family does not cooperate with a local authority's efforts.
- Members emphasised the additional pressures on children's services in some parts of the country due to increasing numbers of unaccompanied children asylum seekers. They highlighted the LGA's call for a national programme to disperse the responsibility of caring for such children more fairly across local authorities.
- Members highlighted the important role that other local organisations besides councils can play in promoting community integration. They noted the potential benefits of strong partnership work between councils and such organisations.

In response, Louise stressed the importance of creating workplace cultures in public bodies whereby individual employees feel confident that they can confront members of the community whom they suspect of abuse. Louise accepted that there is no easy solution to the problem of what to do in instances where a family does not cooperate with a local authority's efforts; however, it is important to admit this and continue searching for solutions.

Louise acknowledged the pressures that certain councils' children's services face due to increasing numbers of unaccompanied children asylum seekers and noted that central government needs to work with local government to address this issue.

Louise stressed the importance of strong, clear leadership, especially in the context of devolution whereas, in her view, partnership work, unless there was someone to drive it, often amounts to the lowest common denominator of what can be agreed in a meeting. Moreover, because oftentimes no single person is held responsible for outcomes, there is a greater likelihood of oversights in partnership work.

Concluding, Louise anticipated that her final report would be published around June/July 2016. In addition, Louise stated that, whether it is included in the report or pursued separately, she would like to talk with the LGA about new ways to develop local leadership. She noted that central government has plans for new local leadership programmes, but suggested that it is crucial to also have local government input into on this going forward.

2 Chairman's Update

Members **noted** the Chair's update.

3 LGA Boards & Portfolio Chair's Reports

Members **noted** the reports from each of the LGA Board Chairs.

4 Digest of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were **agreed**.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Gary Porter	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Members	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
	Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Cllr Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
	Cllr David Hodge	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City Council
	Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr David Burbage MBE	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
	Cllr Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council	
Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council	
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council	

Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Ivan Ould	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Liz Hacket Pain	Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr Blake Pain	Harborough District Council
Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr Sarah Hayward	Camden Council
Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
Cllr Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
Cllr Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Timothy Swift	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr David Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr Mike Eathorne- Gibbons	Cornwall Council
Cllr Peter Reeve	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Alan Seldon	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Daniella Radice	Bristol City Council
Cllr Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
Apologies	
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Claire-Louise Leyland	Camden Council
Cllr Paul Diviani	East Devon District Council
Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Cllr Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Cllr Philippa Roe	Westminster City Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Phil Davies	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr David Acton	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Bryony Rudkin	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Caitlin Bisknell	High Peak Borough Council
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham London Borough Council
Mayor Jules Pipe	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE	Northumberland Council

Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Cllr Keith Wakefield OBE	Leeds City Council
Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Lib Peck	Lambeth London Borough Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
Cllr Anne Western	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Council
Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
Cllr Claire Kober OBE	Haringey Council
Cllr Andy Moorhead	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Chris Townsend	Mole Valley District Council
Alderman Sir David Wootton	City of London Corporation
Cllr Robert Bucke	Tendring District Council
Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Claire Hudson	Mendip District Council
Cllr Mike Bell	North Somerset Council