

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday, 3 March 2016
12.30 pm

Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local
Government House, Smith Square, London,
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Councillors' Forum
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

Guidance notes for visitors

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

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Councillors' Forum
3 March 2016

There will be a meeting of the Councillors' Forum at **12.30 pm on Thursday, 3 March 2016**
Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

Please note: *The Political Group meetings will be held prior to this, as follows:*

11.00am	Conservative	Westminster Suite (8 th floor)
11.00am	Labour	Smith Square Rooms 3 & 4 (Ground floor)
11.00am	Independent	Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2 (Ground floor)
11.00am	Liberal Democrat	Rathbone Rooms 1 & 2 (7 th floor)

A sandwich lunch will be available at 1.15pm in The Terrace Lounge (7th Floor).

Attendance Sheet:

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Political Group meetings:

The group meetings will take place in advance of the meeting. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3334	email: Labour.GroupLGA@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.group@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Location:

A map showing the location of Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

John Wilesmith
john.wilesmith@local.gov.uk 0207 6643363

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Councillors' Forum – Membership 2015/2016

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (39)	
Lord Gary Porter (Chairman)	South Holland District Council
Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Claire-Louise Leyland	Camden Council
Cllr Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Paul Diviani	East Devon District Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough 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 Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Philippa Roe	Westminster City Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr David Burbage MBE	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Ivan Ould	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Liz Hackett Pain	Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Blake Pain	Harborough District Council
Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
Labour (40)	
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Sarah Hayward	Camden Council
Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
Cllr Phil Davies	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council

Cllr David Acton	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE (Vice-Chair)	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Bryony Rudkin	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Caitlin Bisknell	High Peak Borough Council
Cllr Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock (Vice-Chair)	Lewisham London Borough Council
Mayor Jules Pipe	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE	Northumberland Council
Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County 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 Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Cllr Anne Western	Derbyshire County Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County Council
Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Council
Cllr Timothy Swift	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr David Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
Cllr Claire Kober OBE	Haringey Council
Cllr Andy Moorhead	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Substitutes	
Lord Peter Smith	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Iain Malcolm	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Samantha Dixon	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Nicholas Crofts	Liverpool City Council
Cllr Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Independent (10)	
Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice Chairman)	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Chris Townsend	Mole Valley District Council
Cllr Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr Mike Eathorne-Gibbons	Cornwall Council
Alderman Sir David Wootton	City of London Corporation
Cllr Peter Reeve	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Alan Seldon	Herefordshire Council

Vacancy	Independent Group
Cllr Daniella Radice	Bristol City Council
Cllr Robert Bucke	Tendring District Council
Liberal Democrat (9)	
Cllr Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council
Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
Cllr Claire Hudson	Mendip District Council
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Mike Bell	North Somerset Council
Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Stan Collins	South Lakeland District Council
Cllr Ross Henley	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Councilman Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Cllr David Neighbour	Hart District Council
Cllr Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Alan Connett	Teignbridge District Council
Cllr Ruth Dombey	Sutton London Borough Council
Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford Borough Council

Agenda

Councillors' Forum

Thursday 3 March 2016

12.30 pm

Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 9 June 2016, 12.30 pm, Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Integration and Community Cohesion

Purpose

As background to the discussion.

Summary

In July last year Louise Casey was tasked by the Prime Minister with conducting a review of how to boost opportunity and integration as part of the Government's strategy to address extremism. An interim report setting out initial findings is due to be published in early 2016. This session gives an opportunity for councillors to make suggestions and raise questions or issues which particularly affect local government, so Louise Casey can take them into account in completing her review and making any recommendations to the Government. A biography of the speaker is attached at **Appendix A**.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the presentation and raise issues from a local government perspective.

Action

Officers will take forward actions identified.

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Integration and Community Cohesion

Background

1. On 20 July 2015 the Prime Minister explained how the Government would address the threat from extremism. In his speech the Prime Minister outlined the four pillars of the Government's Counter Extremism Strategy. The fourth strand in the Strategy is designed to build a more cohesive society, so more people feel a part of it, and are therefore less vulnerable to extremism.
2. Among the issues that the Prime Minister indicated this strand would seek to address were the isolation of some individuals and communities, increasing the opportunities available in some parts of the country, addressing the barriers created by a lack of proficiency in English, and how greater numbers of women from ethnic minorities could be supported into the workforce.
3. To assist in identifying a range of programmes and interventions to boost opportunity and integration, the Prime Minister announced Louise Casey had been asked to carry out a review of what could be done. In particular he said the review would look at a number of issues including how the Government can ensure people learn English, how employment opportunities could be boosted, and how state agencies can work with communities to promote integration.
4. Since the Prime Minister's announcement Louise Casey has travelled around the country to hear views from a wide range of communities on the issues of isolation and deprivation. In December she wrote to local authority chief executives and the LGA, highlighting the important role local government has to play in this agenda and seeking views on what councils could do to tackle isolation and segregation, and increase integration and cohesion.
5. An interim report from the review is due to be published early in 2016. It will inform the development of a new wider Cohesive Communities Programme in 2016. This will support local interventions that improve integration and extend opportunity in the communities that most need it. In the Spending Review announcement the Government said that current levels of funding for community integration programmes would be maintained, but would be targeted to support the recommendations of the review.

The LGA's work

6. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board heard from the review team in December, and sent a submission to the review in January. The submission outlined councils' work to promote integration, boost opportunities and tackle radicalisation. It also raised a range of other related issues including the role of councils in boosting economic growth; the need to integrate work across Whitehall on Prevent, counter-extremism and integration; and better information sharing by the police and security services with councils.
7. Around the wider Prevent and counter-extremism agenda we are in discussion with the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government to develop a comprehensive support package for councils, and we have published case studies showing how councils are engaging with their communities about the threat of radicalisation.

Appendix A

Louise Casey CB



In July 2015, Louise was appointed by the Prime Minister to carry out a review into how we can boost opportunity and integration in the most isolated and deprived communities. The review is set in the context of the Government's strategy on countering extremism and building more cohesive communities.

In September 2014, Louise was appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles MP, to conduct an independent inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council following Professor Jay's Inquiry into child sexual exploitation. The Report and wider recommendations were submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2015.

From 2011 to August 2015 Louise Casey was the Director General of the Troubled Families programme at the Department of Communities and Local Government. She worked to deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to turn around the lives of 120,000 of the country's most troubled families.

In 2009, Louise was the first independent Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses, acting to promote the interests of victims and witnesses in Whitehall, the Criminal Justice System and beyond.

In 2008, Louise was Director General in the Home Office, heading up the Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Group. Prior to that, she carried out an independent review from the Cabinet Office which took a detailed look at the public's view on crime and how to engage them in tackling it.

In 2005, Louise was appointed as the head of the cross-government Respect Task Force which worked to tackle anti-social behaviour by getting to its causes through programmes such as parenting and intervention and support for problematic families. Before that, she was the Director of the Home Office's Anti-social Behaviour Unit.

Louise also led the successful strategy to reduce the number of people sleeping rough and established the Homelessness Directorate in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Between 1992 and 1999, Louise was Deputy Director of Homelessness Charity Shelter and, prior to that, held a number of posts in the social welfare sector.

Louise was awarded the Companion of the Order of Bath (CB) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, 2008.

Chairman's Update

This report covers the Chairman's activities in the period since the last Councillors' Forum: 21 January 2016 to 3 March 2016.

LGA business

- Council of Regions' Delegation
- District Councils' Network winter assembly
- Shared Chief Executive SIG meeting
- LGA Labour Vice President's lunch
- Joint County Councils' Network and District Councils' Network summit
- Lord Kerslake, President – Local Government Association
- LGA Conservative Vice Presidents lunch
- South East England Councils' meeting
- East Midlands Councils' meeting
- AGM of the UK Delegation to the EU Council of Europe
- Catherine Harrington, Director of the National Community Land Trust Network
- Citizens Advice

Ministerial/Parliamentary business

- Brandon Lewis MP - Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Department for Communities and Local Government
- The Hon. Dr Stefan Buontempo - Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government, Malta
- 2016 Rehab Parliamentary pancake race
- East of England Parliamentary reception
- Lords' committee on housing
- Graham Stuart MP
- Rt Hon John Healey MP, Shadow Minister for Housing and Planning

Meetings with organisations and individuals

- NALC and Local Democracy APPG reception
- Homes for Heroes Foundation launch
- ResPublica report launch
- Crisis campaign launch
- SOLACE charity dinner

Children and Young People Board – report from Cllr Roy Perry (Chair)

Franco-British Cooperation on NEETs

1. I attended a meeting arranged by the Franco-British council in Paris to discuss differing approaches to training and supporting for those not in education, employment or training (NEETs) on 25 January. The discussion focussed on how the two countries currently manage young people's transition from school into the labour market, how they might cooperate to improve outcomes, and how best practice could be shared going forward.

Roundtable on Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

2. I attended a roundtable on mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse organised by Professor Michael Preston-Shoot, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, Bedfordshire University on 22 February. The event was attended by academics and senior staff from relevant government agencies. Participants considered reporting from countries where mandatory reporting is already in operation; heard from advocates on both sides of the debate; and considered alternative solutions, such as new sanctions for failure to act.

Roundtable on Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

3. Cllr Richard Watts attended a multi-agency roundtable discussion about LSCB governance and accountabilities, hosted by the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs (AILC) on 13 January. The purpose of the discussion was to inform the various parties' responses to the ongoing review of the role and functions of LSCBs being undertaken by former Director of Children's Services Alan Wood on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). Since the roundtable, Cllr Watts has participated in a survey that was distributed to participants by Alan Wood. The LGA submitted a corporate response to the survey prior to the deadline of 22 February, and Cllr Watts will attend a follow-up meeting to the initial roundtable event that has been organised for 16 March.

Meeting with former Director of Children's Services Alan Wood

4. Cllr Richard Watts and Cllr David Simmonds will meet with the former Director of Children's Services Alan Wood to discuss the ongoing review of the role and functions of LSCBs that he is undertaking on behalf of the DfE. The discussion will consider the current role of LSCBs within the local authority multi-agency space, including a consideration of what multi-agency arrangements need to achieve locally, how that might best be achieved, and where accountability for ensuring the effectiveness of child protection arrangements should lie. The attendees will also aim to identify what success looks like and the factors that make LSCBs successful or unsuccessful, and consider whether alternative structures to the existing model might ultimately improve the outcomes for children and young people. In addition, Alan Wood has asked for the LGA's view on the impact that centralisation of the Serious Case Review (SCR) process is likely to have on the role of LSCBs, and to suggest how learning from SCRs in future can be effectively embedded in local practice.

Analysis of Ofsted Inspection Reports

5. The Board commissioned a piece of work analysing the outcomes of all Ofsted Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspections to date, alongside a textual analysis of the key judgments set out in the inspection reports. The resulting research highlights seven characteristics of an authority that is likely to be judged as good, which will help to inform local authorities' improvement work.

Home Office Expert Panel on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

6. A report summarising the meeting of the Home Office Expert Panel on CSE and local delivery that I attended in December has been shared with officials across Government, submitted to ministers, and presented to the cross-Government directors group on CSE.

Leadership Essentials: Children's Services

7. We held a 'Leadership Essentials' event for children's services from 28 – 29 January. The event provided portfolio holders, service committee chairs and interested council leaders a chance to develop leadership skills specific to the area of children's services and share their experiences among colleagues dealing with similar challenges.

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City Regions Board – report from Sir Richard Leese (Chair)

Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016

1. Since the last Councillors' Forum, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill has received Royal Assent. Throughout the Bill's progress through Parliament, the City Regions Board and the People and Places Board have worked in partnership to steer the LGA's lobbying activity. As a result, the LGA successfully secured, to the benefit of the sector, the requirement of the Secretary of State to make an annual report on devolution in England. The LGA also got on record assurances from the Government that the powers to determine the composition of local governance arrangements and remove functions from local authorities without local consent would only be used in exceptional circumstances and with safeguards to protect the viability of all affected authorities. The Boards also steered officers to consistently make the case for there to be greater flexibility in how councils could come together, and these changes are reflected in the Act.
2. On 11 February I spoke at the Lloyds Baking Group Ambassador's conference on the changing local government landscape and the emerging devolution deals. I highlighted the importance of engaging with combined authorities and their importance for promoting growth.

Devolution – the LGA Support offer

3. Take up of the LGA's devolution support offer, drawn up with direction from City Regions Board the People and Places and, remains excellent, and officers have received positive feedback from councils on the range of services that have been used. The Board have steered officers to continue to position the LGA as the key provider of devolution support to councils. Thanks to the Board's input, the offer has evolved and will offer the following additional support:
 - 3.1. A guide for councils will be commissioned which will combine details on the legislative provisions for combined authorities with practical suggestions and advice on setting up a CA.
 - 3.2. The LGA has partnered with New Economy, one of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA's) research, policy and strategy arms to:
 - 3.2.1. produce the first comprehensive tax and spend data set for all council areas, including explainers and guides as to how to best use this to help make the case to Government for, and support the design and delivery of devolved services;
 - 3.2.2. capture local and national experiences of devolution thus far and share the lessons learned.
4. The Board has also commissioned officers to:
 - 4.1. work with Professor Robin Hambleton at the University of the West of England to explore models of executive governance, including international arrangements;
 - 4.2. work with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to support areas to develop their governance arrangements and capture the related learning;

- 4.3. host specialist local devolution communications workshops.
5. The LGA hosted a roundtable on health and social care devolution with Greater Manchester combined authority and health partners, and the Public Service Transformation Network to share learning from Greater Manchester's experiences.

Commission on economic inclusion

6. The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) approached the City Regions Board to consider sponsorship of an independent commission which will examine the next stage of devolution for cities. This work will concentrate on how devolution can secure better outcomes in social policy and economic performance, and follows on from the RSA's City Growth Commission which was chaired by Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs. This report was influential in the development of Government (and other parties') devolution policy. Jim O'Neill was ennobled after the election and is now a Treasury minister, with responsibility for city devolution.
7. The Board has agreed to sponsor the commission, which is still in a scoping phase. Members are currently helping to shaping the commission's terms of reference.

Devolving employment and skills

8. The LGA continues to build on our Realising Talent campaign to influence the Government's planned 2017 Work and Health Programme. This will include widening the suggested geographic scope, ensuring adequate funding is set aside, and that local government has a formal role in the programme.
9. Lead Members will be asked to consider a scoping power to expand our lobbying from April 2017, including:
- 9.1. completing a stock take of employment and skills devolution as part of a wider analysis of devolution;
 - 9.2. influencing the debate on the future of public employment services leading up to the expiry of Job Centre Plus estate contracts in 2018, including international comparisons; and
 - 9.3. mapping councils' influence (existing and potential) over the skills spectrum including Area Based Reviews.

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Community Wellbeing Portfolio – from Cllr Izzi Seccombe (Chair)

LGA / ADPH Public Health Conference

1. The annual LGA/ADPH public health conference took place on Wednesday 3 February and I was delighted to see many local politicians and Directors of Public Health — the people who represent the leadership of the public health system in places up and down the country. The conference showed us how these local leaders are focused on improving the health and prosperity of the people with real energy and commitment. 220 delegates were in attendance including Jane Ellison MP and Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England.

Child Obesity Strategy

2. The Department of Health is due to announce its new child obesity strategy which will likely look at the impact of physical inactivity, marketing, food formulation and the role the 'obesogenic environment' plays in contributing to a child becoming overweight and obese. The LGA is holding a [free conference](#) on 17 March to discuss the contents of the strategy.

Adult social care efficiency project

3. The LGA is re launching an [efficiency project](#) that aims to help develop innovative, efficient and sustainable approaches in care and health services. Councils are now being invited to bid to participate in the efficiency project.

Teenage pregnancy and young parents

4. On 3 February we released the publication 'Good progress but more to do: teenage pregnancy and young parents'. It is over 15 years since the then government launched its Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in response to England having one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Western Europe. Since then the under-18 conception rate has halved thanks to the [hard work of councils and their partners](#).

Public health transformation three years on

5. This year's compilation of [case studies](#) shows how local authorities continue to make progress on improving health and wellbeing and tackling health inequalities since public health was formally transferred from the NHS in April 2013.

Health Committee inquiry into Public health

6. Following our [written evidence submission](#) to the Health Committee, the LGA was called to give oral evidence to their inquiry into public health post 2013. Cllr Jonathan McShane represented the LGA and the Public Health Systems Group at the session, and he began by welcoming the transfer of public health responsibilities to local government. Cllr McShane stressed the importance of adequate funding for public health and ensuring local authorities retained the autonomy to make local decisions about how resources should be allocated.

Media Releases

7. In recent weeks I have responded to an [ADPH report on the impact of public health funding reductions](#), [NHS figures on delayed discharges](#) and a new [PHE report on life expectancy](#). You can read the full details of each on the LGA's website.

Leadership Essentials for Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs and Vice-Chairs – 13-14 July 2016

8. Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) are a unique forum where clinical, political, professional and community leaders come together to meet local health challenges. As system leaders HWBs will be instrumental in developing a place-based approach to transformation and integration. The LGA has planned a [two day residential session in Coventry](#) on 13-14 July 2016 to support Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) chairs and vice chairs to meet these challenges by coming together away from the day job to reflect on the effectiveness of their HWB in the current context, actively learn from each other and share experiences through the LGA's tried and tested approach to leadership development. The session is led by member and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) peers with input from national partners.

Combatting Loneliness

9. On 3 February I wrote in the Guardian on how loneliness needs to be recognised as a major public health concern. Deputy Chairman Cllr Peter Fleming also appeared on Good Morning Britain and ITV news bulletins talking about loneliness. Media interest followed on from the LGA publication 'Combatting Loneliness' offering guidance for councils to tackle the issue, published with Age UK and the Campaign to End Loneliness.
10. On 8 February 2016 Cllr Jonathan McShane gave an outline of the 'Combating Loneliness' report to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ageing and Older People. The publication was produced in partnership with Age UK and the Campaign to End Loneliness.

Dementia 2020

11. In January 2016 Cllr Ford attended the PM Challenge on Dementia 2020. Also In January Cllr Ford attended the Dementia Friendly Communities Steering Group part of the implementation programme for the PM Challenge on Dementia 2020.

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Culture, Tourism and Sport Board Chair's Report to Councillors' Forum February 2016

The Visitor Economy

1. I gave a keynote address at Inside Government's tourism conference on 9 February, which was attended by local government, central government and industry. My speech highlighted local government's role creating the conditions for the visitor economy to thrive, opportunities to boost tourism through devolution and the importance of the Discover England Fund complementing local growth priorities.
2. The LGA and councils attended VisitBritain regional events to hear more about the Discover England Fund and I am meeting Sally Balcombe, VisitBritain Chief Executive on 17 March, to discuss this further. It is also vital that English destinations continue to have a strong voice in the new governance arrangements for VisitBritain and VisitEngland.

Culture

3. I was delighted to meet Diane Lees, Chair of the National Museum Directors' Council and Director General of the Imperial War Museum, on 3 February. We discussed the challenges and opportunities facing museums, the importance of partnerships between national and local museums to support capacity and the potential impact of devolution. Ms Lees will share some new case studies and we agreed to keep in touch about the potential impact on museums of localised business rates.
4. I was pleased to meet Councillor Guy Nicholson, London Council's lead member for economy, tourism and culture, on 3 February. We took stock of the implication of the Spending Review for culture and highlighted the importance of our partnerships with Arts Council England. We will continue to work with London Councils as we take forward our culture work programme.
5. Also on 3 February, I met Emma Stewart, Senior Production Manager at Creative England. Creative England supports councils who want to attract production companies to shoot film and TV programmes. We agreed to share new case studies which show how location filming can boost the local economy.
6. The Museums Association annual cuts survey on 13 January attracted considerable media coverage. The LGA's response highlighted that councils recognise the tremendous economic and social benefits museums help to deliver and the imaginative ways in which many councils have responded to budget pressures. However, the scale of financial challenge means that tough decisions have to be made about funding museums.

Sport and Physical Activity

7. Following a number of significant wins for the LGA in the Government's new sports strategy, Sport England is consulting on how it will take forward the recommendations and distribute lottery funding. The LGA and councils attended regional consultation events. The LGA's response highlights councils' strong track record supporting people to get active and how re-balancing funding away from national interventions and towards local approaches will help to ensure the least active are targeted and money saved by improving wellbeing and preventing ill-health. We also highlight the fragmentation of sport and physical activity funding across government departments and press for this to be brought together to support integrated approaches and minimise bureaucracy, in line with other policy areas.
8. A press release linked to the LGA's Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference highlighted how increasing activity can help to reduce premature deaths and how the potential economic and social benefits would be maximised by a locally-led approach to sport and physical activity.

Libraries

9. Councils across the country marked National Libraries Day on 6 February by highlighting the range of activities that take place in libraries. The LGA issued a supportive press release.

Magna Carta and Historic Anniversaries

10. Councillor Peter Golds CBE attended the final Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Committee reception on 7 January. Sir Robert Worcester, Chairman of the Committee, thanked partners including local government for a successful series of events and commemorative activities across the country.
11. I was pleased to attend the 2016 Anniversaries "Parliament in the Making" final event on 21 January. Hosted by the Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, the purpose was to reflect on the many projects and events held to mark the Magna Carta and De Montfort Parliament anniversaries. The LGA's contribution, and that of councils across the country, was highlighted in the commemorative publication.

Culture, Tourism and Sport Annual Conference 24-25 February, Leicester

12. We are looking forward to welcoming over 150 delegates to this year's event. Keynote speakers include Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson (Chair ukactive), Stella Duffy (Co-Director Fun Palaces), Penelope Viscountess Cobham (Chairman VisitEngland), Jennie Price (Chief Executive Sport England) and Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman of Historic England. Workshop topics including transforming libraries, wellbeing and devolution. The Culture Tourism and Sport Board is meeting on 25 February to hear from Leicester City Council about their excellent work and to discuss the implications of planning reform for cultural heritage and landscape.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board – report from Cllr Peter Box CBE (Chair)

Transport for a Growing Economy – 8 March 2016

1. The importance of good transport links to boost productivity and support local economies to grow is something that councils have long recognised. Through investing in new local roads, supporting bus services, fixing potholes, providing integrated solutions, and promoting cycling and walking councils play a vital role in connecting people and businesses to each other.
2. There are exciting and challenging times ahead for councils on local transport as technology progresses, and through people's changing travel patterns. I hope that you can all join the [LGA's 'Transport for a Growing Economy' conference on 8 March](#), in London, which is free to all LGA member councils. The event will help all places think about the leadership needed and opportunities to be exploited over the next few years to deliver transport investment to support growth, and will discuss opportunities of working with Highways England and Network Rail, the economic case for investment, and case studies on how councils are taking responsibility for securing the delivery of their future transport needs.

Housing Commission

3. The LGA Housing Commission has now held two evidence sessions in Eastleigh and Wakefield, chaired by EEHT Lead Members. These were well attended by councils, partners and other key organisations and provided an opportunity for wide-ranging discussion and debate. Two more evidence sessions are scheduled for April. The Commission's call for evidence closed on 26 February 2016, but we continue to welcome submissions and interest after the deadline. The Housing Commission will publish a report which will be formally launched at the LGA Annual Conference in July.

Housing Lobbying

4. The LGA has been working hard behind the scenes to try and influence the [Housing and Planning Bill](#) and the [Welfare Reform Bill](#), but is now clear that some of our key concerns remain. Our public and private efforts will now be fully focused on improving legislation so that councils can play their lead role in increasing housebuilding, enabling home ownership, and reducing homelessness and benefits. This has included calls for additional flexibilities to prevent the loss of 80,000 council homes widely covered in the national press.

CLG Committee Inquiry into National Planning Policy

5. The Communities and Local Government Committee took oral evidence on national planning policy from key stakeholders, including Vice-Chairman of the LGA Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board Cllr Martin Tett. During the session Cllr Tett set out that the introduction of the NPPF was a positive step and there should now be a proper review of the Framework. He used the opportunity to raise concerns about the lack of proper resourcing in local planning departments and around proposals for Starter Homes in the Housing and Planning Bill, and also called for new settlements to be determined locally.

Employment and Apprenticeships

6. The Work and Health Programme, announced in the November 2015, will support claimants with health conditions or disabilities and those unemployed for over two years, replacing Work Programme and Work Choice. The LGA was pleased it reflects many of our [own proposals](#) submitted to Government, but believes for the WHP to be effective, it must be locally commissioned across England, with appropriate funding levels. [Click here](#) for information about LGA activity to influence it.
7. The Government has committed to creating three million new apprenticeships by 2020, with two primary measures to achieve this – a public sector target and an Apprenticeship Levy. Local authorities will be subject to both. You can feed into the LGA response to the Apprenticeship targets for public sector bodies consultation [here](#) The LGA will host a roundtable with Whitehall and councils on 23 February to discuss practical measures local areas are considering.

Buses legislation

8. Councils are hoping that the Government's new buses legislation will allow bus services outside London to be provided in the same way as they are in London, giving local transport authorities the powers to plan, develop and regulate bus services, offering passengers simpler, integrated Oyster-style ticketing and guarantees on service quality. Most devolution deals include the powers to pursue a franchising model. We understand the Government's Buses Bill will aim to do this, however we feel there are other measures which could be taken, including devolving Bus Services Operators Grant to councils, which will help ensure public subsidy is better targeted. The LGA's ['Missing the Bus?'](#) report outlines how councils have responded to reduced funding and DfT have provided a helpful [Buses Bill Update](#).

Air Quality

9. The LGA presented both [written](#) and [oral](#) evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee enquiry into air pollution. The enquiry is looking into Defra's role for reducing emissions of key pollutants, including NO₂, and whether they go far enough and fast enough to meet EU standards; and whether Government departments should intervene further to reduce emission. The LGA believes that Defra has insufficient input into on policies implemented by other government departments, notably Department for Transport and that Government should do more nationally to address air quality, such as making industry-wide changes to influence a switch from petrol and diesel vehicles to ultra-low emission vehicles and other alternative modes of transport. This should be further supported by giving local authorities the powers and funding to manage traffic and provide alternatives to the car.

Climate Local Annual Conference

10. [The Climate Local Annual Conference](#) will be held in London on Tuesday 22 March 2016. This event will bring together councils, partners and Government representatives to debate issues, hear details of pioneering council led projects to reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to a changing climate.

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Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr David Simmonds CBE (Chairman)

Improvement

1. On 20 January, I welcomed over 80 council delegates to the joint LGA and Cabinet Office, CERT-UK (the UK National Computer Emergency Response Team) and CiSP (Cyber-security Information Sharing Partnership) cyber resilience security exercise hosted at the LGA offices. Each of the participating councils brought a team made up of officers in different roles, including a senior officer, IT Security, IT, Legal, and Communications to enable them to respond as an organisation to the various cyber exercises they were set on the day. Representatives from the Cabinet Office and CERT-UK set each of the teams a series of scenarios based on real cyber threats for them to respond to and deal with in real time. The councils' responses and their feedback from the session helped and gave us all better understanding of the sector's capacity so we are in a more informed position to provide useful guidance going forward.
2. I wrote an article [in this month's First Magazine](#) (page 10) setting out how the LGA is refreshing the improvement support it offers councils, and urging all councils to make the most of the help available from experienced local government colleagues. Among the key changes I highlighted were that, in the future, the LGA 'will plan on the basis that all local authorities should have a corporate peer challenge or finance peer challenge every four or five years,' and 'a follow-up visit will become a standard part of the corporate peer challenge process.'
3. As part of the Care and Health Improvement Programme 2016/17, we are launching an efficiency project to help develop innovative, efficient and sustainable approaches in care and health services. The project, running to March 2017, will help councils develop approaches to improving efficiency in care and health, creating experience and learning that the rest of the sector can draw on. The project focuses on areas identified by the sector as posing a systematic challenge that have the potential to yield efficiency savings, whilst not duplicating other support programmes already in place: 1) commissioning and market shaping, 2) integration and 3) managing demand for care and health services. It will build on and further develop learning from the successful [Adult Social Care Efficiency programme](#), which ended last year. Councils are now being invited to bid to participate in the efficiency project before the deadline of Friday 26 February 2016.

Transparency

4. On 25 January, I gave evidence to [the Independent Commission on Freedom of Information](#) (FOI). The LGA was invited in response to our submission to the call for evidence. I pointed out that councils are open to citizens but that the cost of FOI is challenging for councils. I made the case for extending the application of a safe space for deliberation to local authorities – as government currently experiences it - and pointed out the burden from a growing number of requests in particular from commercial organisations and from vexatious and research requests.

Productivity

5. I authored the foreword to the final 'Efficiency Opportunities through health and social care integration' report, which is due to be published in March 2016. The interim report is available [here](#).
6. We responded to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport request for submissions to inform the UK's new Digital Strategy. Cllr Mark Hawthorne and I jointly wrote to the Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy, Ed Vaizey MP, and the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, to highlight the need to collaborate more effectively with local government on this agenda to allow us to better co-design solutions for the public sector.
7. Cllr Shirley Pannell featured in a podcast promoting the LGA's Productivity Expert programme. In this podcast, which is the first of a series of films looking at the LGA's sector-led improvement offer, we listen to the experiences of three councils who have engaged a productivity expert with the help of LGA funding to see how they can help deliver efficiency savings. You can watch the film [here](#).
8. We published a [report](#), aimed at councillors and senior officers, outlining the business case for councils to invest in energy efficiency for their buildings and renewable energy. The report sets out the level of savings and income potential that exists for the different generic council types as well as typical payback periods.

Leadership

9. We published a new [e-learning module and councillor workbook](#) on scrutiny. The workbook was written in conjunction with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and both resources form part of the Community Leadership offer under the LGA's Highlighting Political Leadership support.
10. We held Leadership Essential events in Children's Services (28 – 29 January), Fire and Rescue (15 – 16 February), Sport (2 – 3 March), Getting Your Message Across (30 – 31 January) and Effective Scrutiny (23 – 24 January). These events provide a chance for councillors to develop leadership skills in a particular area and share experiences among colleagues dealing with similar challenges. Cllr Izzi Seccombe presented at the Commissioning Academy for Elected Members on 20 January 2016 about the relationship between officers and elected members. We also ran a Commissioning Academy for Elected Members (21 – 22 January) and held a Risk Management Political Leadership Masterclass (17 February).

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People & Places Board – report from Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE (Chair)

Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016

1. Since the last Councillors' Forum, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill has received Royal Assent. Throughout the Bill's progress through Parliament, the People and Places Board and Cities Regions Board have worked in partnership to steer the LGA's lobbying activity. As a result, the LGA successfully secured, to the benefit of the sector, the requirement of the Secretary of State to make an annual report on devolution in England. The LGA also got on record assurances from the Government that the powers to determine the composition of local governance arrangements and remove functions from local authorities without local consent would only be used in exceptional circumstances and with safeguards to protect the viability of all affected authorities. The Boards also steered officers to consistently make the case for there to be greater flexibility in how councils could come together, and these changes are reflected in the Act.
2. Following discussion at the January People and Places Board, the Board Chair has written to the Secretary of State urging every effort to be made to support the signing of deals in non-metropolitan areas.

Devolution – the LGA Support offer

3. Take up of the LGA's devolution support offer, drawn up with direction from the People and Places and City Regions Board, remains excellent, and officers have received positive feedback from councils on the range of services that have been used. The Board have steered officers to continue to position the LGA as the key provider of devolution support to councils. Thanks to the Board's input, the offer has evolved and will offer the following additional support:
 - 3.1. A guide for councils will be commissioned which will combine details on the legislative provisions for combined authorities with practical suggestions and advice on setting up a CA.
 - 3.2. The LGA has partnered with New Economy, one of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA's) research, policy and strategy arms to:
 - 3.2.1. produce the first comprehensive tax and spend data set for all council areas, including explainers and guides as to how to best use this to help make the case to Government for, and support the design and delivery of devolved services.
 - 3.2.2. capture local and national experiences of devolution thus far and share the lessons learned.
4. The Board has also commissioned officers to:
 - 4.1. work with Professor Robin Hambleton at the University of the West of England to explore models of executive governance, including international arrangements;
 - 4.2. work with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to support areas to develop their governance arrangements and capture the related learning;
 - 4.3. host specialist local devolution communications workshops.

5. The LGA hosted a roundtable on health and social care devolution with Greater Manchester combined authority and health partners, and the Public Service Transformation Network to share learning from Greater Manchester's experiences.

Devolving employment and skills

6. The LGA continues to build on our Realising Talent campaign to influence the Government's planned 2017 Work and Health Programme. This will include widening the suggested geographic scope, ensuring adequate funding is set aside, and that local government has a formal role in the programme.
7. Lead Members will be asked to consider a scoping power to expand our lobbying from April 2017, including:
 - 7.1. completing a stock take of employment and skills devolution as part of a wider analysis of devolution;
 - 7.2. influencing the debate on the future of public employment services leading up to the expiry of Job Centre Plus estate contracts in 2018, including international comparisons; and
 - 7.3. mapping councils' influence (existing and potential) over the skills spectrum including Area Based Reviews.

Superfast Broadband and Mobile Connectivity

8. As part of the Board's Superfast Broadband and Mobile Connectivity work programme, the Board received the results of the broadband and mobile connectivity survey it commissioned last year. As a result members commissioned a range of activity.
9. The LGA and Broadband Deliver UK (BDUK) will jointly host an event on 17 March for council officers, councillors and BDUK officials to discuss how best to procure solutions to reach the final five percent.
10. The Chair of the Board has also written to the Chief Executive of BDUK to push for reallocation of any underspend on the Mobile Infrastructure Project to future projects focused on improving mobile connectivity.
11. The Board has also commissioned a campaign to raise awareness of those residents, councillors and businesses still without adequate broadband speeds owing to a lack of suitable digital infrastructure. The campaign aims to help both councils and residents consider different approaches to improving broadband speeds and will focus on increasing members' understanding of the alternative network supplier market to help them make informed judgements on potential alternatives to current delivery partners.
12. The Board successfully lobbied the Culture, Media and Sports Committee to host a local government evidence session to feed into its inquiry into Establishing World Class Connectivity. A session with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Westminster City Council and Connecting Devon and Somerset was held on 3 February, with the sector's viewpoint put forward.

13. Finally, the Chair of the Board will meet with Mobile Network Operators this month to discuss their commercial roll out plans in rural hot spot areas, and explore how both sectors can continue to develop helpful partnerships locally.

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Resources Portfolio – report from Cllr Claire Kober (Chair)

Joint Working with Community Wellbeing Portfolio

1. On 12 February, Resources colleagues and I met with Community Wellbeing Portfolio Lead Members to share experiences and learning from the pilot model thus far.

Local Government Finance Settlement

2. On 8 February, the Department for Communities and Local Government published the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17. As a direct result of LGA and sector lobbying, the Government has made a number of changes in the final settlement, compared to the provisional settlement, which includes £415.6 million of new money for local government:
 - 2.1. Transitional grant of £150 million in both 16/17 and 17/18 for the councils most adversely affected by the change distribution of revenue support grant.
 - 2.2. £2.3 million in 17/18 and £22.8million in 18/19 to remove the additional tariff / top-up adjustment caused by negative RSG.
 - 2.3. An extra £90.5 million has been added to the Rural Services Delivery Grant.
3. In addition, as requested by the LGA, all Shire Districts will be given the flexibility to raise council tax by the maximum of £5 or 2%. This is an additional £39.2 million in council tax in 19/20 if all Shire Districts use this flexibility every year of the four year period. The additional funding together with the assumed use of the £5 council tax flexibility each year leads to a spending power increase of £525 million in total across the four year period. Further details can be found in the [LGA Briefing](#) on the final Local Government Finance Settlement 2016/17.

Independent Council Tax Support Inquiry

4. The LGA has submitted [written evidence](#) to the 'Independent Council Tax Support Inquiry', which is focussing on efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and the impact of Universal Credit. Cllr Claire Hudson (Welfare Lead) and I will meet Eric Ollerenshaw (who is leading the inquiry) on 25 February.

2016 Budget

5. In advance of the Budget 2016 being announced on 16 March, the LGA has made a submission to Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT). The submission which is available [here](#) was cleared through Resources Lead Members, the LGA Executive and LGA Leadership Board.

Business Rates retention

6. We continue to work with the Government on implementation of full retention of business rates, due to come in by 2020. This is a complex reform which requires careful consideration so that it does not have an adverse impact on councils that are currently reliant on top-ups as part of the system, while maintaining a strong incentive. An important aspect of this is management of the financial risk of business rates appeals, avoidance and evasion – we are working with the Government on options to manage this risk (and expect to hear more in Budget 2016 on 16 March), as well as the wider issues needing consideration.

Independent Review of the Community Infrastructure Levy

7. The LGA has submitted evidence into an independent review of the Community Infrastructure Levy commissioned by DCLG. The Review panel includes Cllr John Fuller (Resources Portfolio Vice-Chair). The LGA's submission can be viewed [here](#).

LGA Welfare Conference

8. The LGA's Annual Local Government Welfare Conference took place on 18 February and was chaired by Cllr Claire Hudon – Deputy Chair of the Portfolio. This conference explored how councils

are designing and integrating services to improve life chances and outcomes for low income households, in the context of ongoing welfare reform and the implementation of Universal Credit.

Supported Accommodation

9. The Government have confirmed that they will be conducting a review of supported accommodation, with findings expected in the Spring. In response to amendments tabled at the [Report Stage debate](#) for the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, Lord Freud said Government would use the review to find a workable and sustainable long-term solution for both the supported housing sector and Government. Lord Freud confirmed the providers of supported accommodation would be fully involved.

Universal Support delivered locally

10. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be broadening Universal Support (US) back out to encompass employment and other safety net support provided by councils. The opening out is welcome and suggests our lobbying on the local safety net has had impact. However, there is still no promise of sustainable funding or clarity about responsibility for the safety net in the longer term.

Skills and Apprenticeships

11. Cllr Linda Van den Hende - Portfolio Skills Champions - has contacted members across the regions seeking intelligence on the help they would like from the LGA in meeting their skills challenges.

Pensions

12. Cllr Roger Phillips has been appointed the first chair of the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board in England and Wales. Set up under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the board has a statutory function to provide advice and guidance to local authority pension funds on efficient and effective management of the LGPS and to advise DCLG on the desirability of making changes to the scheme.
13. Cllr Phillips also attended a meeting on 12 January with the chairs of LGPS pension funds to discuss the creation of an Infrastructure 'Clearing House'. Such a body would be an access point for projects to present to the LGPS and for LGPS to bid for projects directly.

JNC Youth and Community Workers

14. The National Employers are supporting the assimilation of Youth & Community employees to LGS terms and conditions and therefore withdrawing from national collective bargaining through the JNC for Youth & Community Workers. Support will be provided to councils in advance of this transition.

Public Sector Employment Policy

15. The Government is continuing to conduct consultation exercises on a variety of topics, including:
- 15.1. Sickness absence – the LGA has held preliminary discussions with the Treasury as part of its review, stressing that absence management is very much a local issue.
 - 15.2. Internal-only recruitment - the LGA is preparing a response which explains that councils use internal-only recruitment in the special circumstances of reorganisation and redundancy.
 - 15.3. English-speaking requirements –the LGA is working with Government on preparing standards to ensure requirements to introduce minimum English speaking across public service are not onerous.
 - 15.4. Name-blind recruitment – The Government has pledged to reduce the potential of discrimination by removing names from recruitment sifts in the civil service and has asked LGA to highlight good practice to councils.
16. It can be seen that, along with changes to exit payments and activity on senior pay levels, the Government is pursuing a policy of considerable influence and reform in public sector employment practice. The LGA is working with the various departments involved to ensure that the policies are introduced in ways that made sense for local government.

Public Health workforce

17. Cllr Linda Van den Hende took part in a workshop at the recent LGA-ADPH Public Health Conference where it was argued strongly that the wider local government workforce needs to develop a variety of public health skills to help promote wellbeing.

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Simon Blackburn (Chair)

APPG on Beer Reducing the Strength schemes

1. Cllr Tony Page represented councils at the APPG on Beer's session into Reducing the Strength schemes. Cllr Page robustly defended these schemes and called for any evidence against these schemes to be published.

British Transport Police intelligence-sharing resource

2. I have written with Simon Crowther, Chief Constable of the British Transport Police, to all community safety portfolio holders to inform them of a new intelligence-sharing resource which has been made available to them by BTP, the Home Office and the LGA.

LGA survey on licensing fees

3. I have written with Rob Whiteman, Chief Executive of CIPFA, to all finance portfolio holders to ask them to commit their council to completing the LGA's survey on licensing fees. This follows the Home Office's request for the LGA to build the evidence base for localising licensing fees.

Trading standards review

4. I wrote to members of the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers and Chartered Institute of Trading Standards about publication of the summary report from the LGA's trading standards review.

Year Ahead in regulatory services conference

5. Cllr Nick Worth spoke to delegates at the Year Ahead in regulatory services conference in Stratford upon Avon on 11 February. Cllr Worth discussed the findings of the recent review on trading standards, as well as the potential implications of devolution for regulatory services.

Research into local area vulnerability to gambling harm

6. Cllr Tony Page attended the launch of Westminster and Manchester's research into local area vulnerability to gambling harm. The research was part-funded by the LGA, and will be shared around all councils as soon as possible.

Illegal skin lightening products

7. An LGA press release highlighted the dangers of illegal skin lightening products. This follows recent seizures by local trading standards teams of products containing toxic and poisonous ingredients. In the release, I warned that people should check the ingredients of products and contact their local trading standards team if they have any concerns.

Workshops on Meeting the Challenge of Severe Weather Outbreaks and other Emergencies

8. The first two of three workshops on coping with the challenges of dealing with emergencies were successfully delivered in Bristol on 11 February and in Local Government House on 17 February. The workshops are aimed at senior leaders, both elected and officer, and senior media and communications specialists. The third workshop will take place on 25 February in York.

Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services - Summary of consultation responses and next steps

9. Cllr Hilton responded to the Government's response to the consultation on enabling closer working between the emergency services.

Fire/health regional meetings

10. Cllr John Edwards, Chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and member of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee, spoke at the first fire/health regional meeting on 9 February at the West Midlands Fire Headquarters. This brought together stakeholders from across the region to discuss how fire and health and social care partners can work together on locally identified needs.

Prevent and counter-extremism

11. I met the Security Minister, the Rt. Hon. John Hayes MP, to discuss the role that councillors can play in the Prevent agenda, and how central and local government could work more closely on countering extremism.

HMIC PEEL Legitimacy Reference Group

12. Cllr Sophie Linden attended the Reference Group Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary have established to support their strand of work around the legitimacy of the police as part of their assessment of police forces' performance.

Greater powers to limit the opening of late-night premises

13. Cllr Tony Page and the Community Wellbeing Portfolio holder, Cllr Izzi Seccombe, raised councils' inability to act on public health concerns when considering alcohol licensing applications in a press release, and highlighted the need for a public health criteria in the Licensing Act.

FGM figures

14. The work the National FGM Centre, a joint initiative between the LGA and Barnardo's, is doing with six pilot areas has resulted in over 40 referrals of children at risk over the last three months, which Cllr Lisa Brett's the Board's lead on FGM highlighted with Barnardo's in a press release.

Building Safe and Healthy Communities

15. Cllr John Edwards spoke as part of a panel at a regional event in the West Midlands organised by the Chief Fire Officers Association, Public Health England and NHS England on how fire and rescue services can become more involved in improving the health and wellbeing of their communities.

JESIP

16. Cllr Kay Hammond attend the Board of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme which considered issues related to improving interoperability between the blue-light services.

Strategic Resilience Board

17. Cllrs Jeremy Hilton and Les Byrom attended the first meeting of the Fire Strategic Resilience Board since the transfer of responsibility for fire policy from CLG to the Home Office. Issues considered at the meeting included flooding, national resilience and the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.

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Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date:	Thursday 21 January 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
6	<p>The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP - Spending Review and the Local Government Finance Settlement</p> <p>The Chair introduced the meeting and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Rt. Hon. Greg Clark MP.</p> <p>The Secretary of State spoke on the Spending Review and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2016/17, assuring members that he would go through responses to this in detail and consider every suggestion (over 260 had been received), although he emphasised he would be unable to go into specifics until he had responded formally. He informed the meeting that he had met with representatives and was taking the consultation seriously as he believed in the need for devolved powers.</p> <p>He outlined the following points with reference to the Spending Review and Finance Settlement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The timetable following the translation of the Autumn Statement into the Provisional Statement was problematic. It only left a few weeks for a final settlement at the same time as councils were setting their budgets. He emphasised that the process must be made more conducive to long term strategic planning and that this was an argument for agreeing to a four year settlement.• Though accepting a four year settlement could lead to efficiency savings and allow councils to plan ahead, the Government would want to know what proposed efficiency plans were and it would be necessary for councils to provide this information. There was an expectation that many councils would respond in the consultation on this.• The UK was currently one of the most centralised states in the world, but by 2020 this would be reversed and local authorities would have their own resources. There would be a change in how local government was financed and this would mark a new relationship between central and local government.	

- When the finance settlement was confirmed, there would need to be a conversation on councils retaining business rates. The Secretary of State invited the LGA and councillors to propose how they would manage the retention of business rates, seeking agreement on this with the intention of recommending the proposals to government. If no proposals were made, the Secretary of State would produce a plan.
- The Secretary of State assured the meeting that he understood the New Homes Bonus was important to many local authorities. It was a good driver of growth and housing and it would be worth there being a discussion on this in the review and a consultation on its design.
- It was clear from the provisional settlement that there would need to be savings in local government. The Secretary of State saluted councillors for finding the savings required in the last parliament and highlighted that the Institute for Fiscal Studies had shown that the cuts now required were less than those of 2009-2010 when council spending had been cut by 25%.
- Adult social care presented local government with a challenge. Whilst the Chancellor had agreed the 2% precept, councils would also want to consider the impact on individuals' council tax bills. The Secretary of State acknowledged that the interim period pending improvements to the Better Care Fund would be the most challenging.
- Reform of health and social services would need to be considered including whether they services should be brought together. Citizens deserved joined up treatment and the Minister emphasised he would work with areas that had the ambition to go beyond that.
- The provisional settlement, made no assumption that councils would use reserves. The Office for Budget Responsibility had assumed that councils would add to their reserves. The Secretary of State emphasised that he did not assume this, or that councils would necessarily use the 2% increase in council tax, as there was a case for keeping council tax low.
- Whilst the settlement indicated that significant savings would be required and difficult decisions would have to be taken, councils would benefit from business rates which although estimated to rise with inflation generally rose ahead of this. In addition, the estimate of the council tax base was a conservative assumption as house building was on the increase. The Secretary of State emphasised that councils would eventually have more control over their finances at a local level.

The floor was then opened up to questions:

- Whilst the opportunity for a four year settlement was welcomed, there was concern that the 2% precept would not fill the gap between demand and delivery for adult social care. Members asked whether it was possible to bring the Better Care Fund forward to help manage the gap. The Secretary of State assured members that his department had followed representation from the

LGA and ADASS to address the funding gap, securing £3.5 billion from the Treasury when £2.9 billion had been offered. Whilst the Better Care Fund would only be available in later years, it would smooth the U-shaped settlement and make the transition more manageable. Greater devolved powers within the provisional settlement would eventually help local authorities to address the pressures in adult social care. He requested that councillors continue to advise him on the situation.

- Members highlighted the importance of maintaining a settlement that included the ability to raise finance. It was pointed out that the tax base was 25 years out of date and that in places like Manchester, 15% of adults did not pay council tax. It was felt there ought to be compensation for this. The Secretary of State noted these comments and said he would listen to representation on this although there were no current plans for change in these areas.
- The challenge of integration of health and social services and the strong cultural differences between both were highlighted. The Secretary of State assured members that though this was a difficult area, it was possible to break down different cultural perspectives and make progress.
- Concern was expressed how business rates would be distributed was still unknown and the Secretary of State was asked to elaborate on his thinking on this. The Minister asked if the local government family could put forward proposals, emphasising that by the end of 2019, only 5% of local government funding would be from central government grant and that local authorities would soon be totally self-sufficient.

7 Chair's Update

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

8 LGA Boards & Panel Chair's Reports

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

9 Digest of the last meeting

The minutes of the last 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 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 David Hodge	Surrey County Council
Cllr Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr David Burbage MBE	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
Cllr David Acton	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Bryony Rudkin	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	North Hertfordshire District 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 Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Keith Wakefield OBE	Leeds City Council
Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Cllr Timothy Swift	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough 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
Cllr Mike Bell	North Somerset Council
Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council

Apologies

Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Claire-Louise Leyland	Camden Council
Cllr Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Cllr Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Blake Pain	Harborough District Council
Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
Cllr Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County Council

LGA location map

Local Government Association

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Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

St James's Park (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

Buses 3 and 87 travel along Millbank, and the 507 between Victoria and Waterloo stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

- 507** Waterloo - Victoria
- C10** Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria
- 88** Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Bus routes – Millbank

- 87** Wandsworth - Aldwych
- 3** Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

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The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

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Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

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