

Note of last LGA Leadership Board meeting

Title: LGA Leadership Board
Date: Wednesday 5 April 2017
Venue: Rooms A&B, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street,
London, EC1M 5LG

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made. The apologies were noted as listed at **Appendix A**.

2 The council role in education

Cllr Richard Watts (Children & Young People Board Chair) introduced the report which updated on the Department for Education's review of the council role in education and children's services. In doing so, he commented on the latest discussions with the Department, and sought Leadership Board's view on how to develop further the LGA's proposals for a 'reset' in relations between central and local government on schools.

The Board welcomed the update and highlighted a number of areas for consideration in the LGA's future activities and discussions with the Department. These included: lobbying for a reversal of the planned £600 million cut to the Education Services Grant; the establishment of a duty to cooperate across all education providers; greater onus on schools to cooperate with Local Safeguarding Boards; support for schools and authorities to ensure uptake of school improvement funding; and the employment of maintained school staff.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board:

- i. **noted** the report and LGA response to the schools funding consultations; and
- ii. **agreed** that their comments inform the LGA's proposals for a 'reset' in relations between central and local government on schools.

3 2017 Spring Budget

Sarah Pickup (Deputy Chief Executive) introduced the report by summarising the announcements in the 2017 Spring Budget with implications for local government and updated on the LGA's work following the Budget.

In the following discussion, Members welcomed the additional £2 billion of new funding

for adult social care and Green Paper, along with the role of the LGA in sharpening the criteria for its use. Disappointment however was expressed that efforts to reverse the significant impact of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) reforms had been unsuccessful.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board noted the report.

4 Further Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review

Sarah Pickup (Deputy Chief Executive) introduced the report which updated on the LGA's work on further business rates retention and fair funding review, including the Local Government Finance Bill and the DCLG consultation on further business rates retention.

In the following discussion, comments included:

- In discussing fairness, Members emphasised the imperative of holding Government to its commitment on this, particularly in the context of a number of unsuccessful amendments to the Bill. Specific comments included: a needs baseline assessment for all local authorities, addressing perverse incentives, as well as having greater control over the system as a whole.
- The Board emphasised the importance of developing a business engagement strategy to increase engagement and understanding with the business community on business rates reform, as well as wider economic development.
- In discussing responsibilities, the Board emphasised the importance that reforms be fiscal neutral, and that they not be seen as a solution to adult social care funding. In doing so, members noted the potential implications of new responsibilities on different authority types.
- With reference to the complexity of the reforms, the Board highlighted the importance of clear and comprehensible LGA communication on the issue to promote understanding within the sector. Specifically, it was asked that the inclusion of safety nets in the future system be communicated more widely.
- A Member suggested that the Local Government Finance Bill could provide an opportunity to table an amendment relating to inclusion of members' in the local government pension scheme.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** this report and agreed that their comments inform LGA activity.

5 LGA Perceptions Survey 2016/2017

David Holdstock (Director of Communications) summarised the finding of LGA's annual perceptions survey of its membership and associated action plan to address those issues identified. In doing so, he highlighted the overall positive trajectory of the survey results, however noted the need to increase efforts to engage with frontline councillors.

The report was noted without further comment.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** the results of the 2016/2017 perceptions survey and **agreed** the action plan.

6 LGA Pay Policy Statement

Claire Holloway (Head of Corporate Services) introduced the LGA's Pay Policy Statement for annual review. In doing so, she drew attention to the Constitution Task Group's recommendation that the remit of the LGA's Independent Remuneration Panel be extended to advise the Leadership Board on senior staffing matters.

The Board agreed the Pay Policy Statement, however were content with the processes in place regarding Member oversight of staffing matters and therefore did not supportive the proposed amendment to the role of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board:

- i. **approved** the LGA Pay Policy statement and **noted** the inclusion of pension contribution rates;
- ii. **agreed** not to extend the remit of the Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on senior staffing matters and that the current member oversight arrangements be formalised within the policy; and
- iii. **noted** that the next annual review would be April 2018.

7 General Assembly 4 July 2017: Outline Programme

The report which set out the draft agenda for the General Assembly meeting on 4 July 2017 was moved without further comment.

With reference to the LGA Conference programme, the importance of a gender balance of speakers across the whole programme was reiterated.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **endorsed** the agenda for the 4 July 2017 General Assembly.

8 LGA Proportionality for 2017-2018

The report which set out the proposed timetable for confirming changes to LGA proportionality post 2017 local elections was approved without further comment.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** the proposed process and timetable.

9 Chief Executive's report

Cllr David Simmonds CBE took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Mark Lloyd (Chief Executive) moved the report which set out the LGA's main achievements against the business plan priorities since the last meeting. In doing so, he reported on: the latest membership position; the Spring Budget; the Homelessness Reduction Bill; a 98% uptake of the national scheme for the appointment of external auditors for 2018-19; and the Financial Conduct Authority MiFID II consultation.

In the following discussion, comments included:

- There followed a detailed discussion regarding the latest membership position, the variety of contributory factors, and complexities of a diverse cross party membership base. The Board was united in the view that whilst efforts should be made to encourage authorities to remain in membership, the fundamental principles of LGA and its neutral stance on distribution should not be undermined.
- The annual Membership Briefing packs and peer support packages were emphasised as important membership tools. It was noted that earlier circulation of briefing pack, prior to councils' budget setting processes, would provide greater potential for influence and traction.
- With reference to a specific example from a locality, concerns were raised regarding discrepancies between the Home Office's national refugee programme and local Department for Work and Pension (DWP) activity.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** the Chief Executive's report for April 2017.

10 LGA Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was moved without further comment.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** the forward plan.

11 Confidential

The following items were considered in the confidential section of the meeting.

12 Note of the last meeting

Decision

The Leadership Board **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2017.

13 LGA Company Structures: Report of the Company Structures Task and Finish Gro

A confidential presentation and discussion took place.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** that a further report be brought to the June

Leadership Board meeting.

14 Updating the LGA Constitution: Report of the Constitution Task and Finish Group

Sir Steve Bullock (Chair of the Constitution Task Group) summarised the Task Group's work and recommendations.

There followed a confidential discussion.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** a number of specific recommendation and endorsed and commended the amendments set out in the annotated LGA Constitution to the Executive and General Assembly, with the exception of paragraph 18.

15 Commercial Advisory Board Proposals

Sir Steve Bullock (Commercial Advisory Board Chair) updated on a project led by the Commercial Advisory Board.

There followed a confidential discussion.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** a series of recommendations.

16 Congratulations

The Board congratulated Sevenoaks Councils for winning the 2017 Local Government Chronicle Award for innovative council.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Reeve MBE	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford Borough Council
Members	Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Apologies	Baroness Couttie of Downe Philippa Couttie	Westminster City Council

Cllr Sean Anstee
Cllr Anne Western CBE
Cllr Sue Murphy CBE
Cllr Peter Box CBE

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Derbyshire County Council
Manchester City Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council