

Resources Portfolio

Agenda

Thursday, 21 April 2016
1.00 pm

Bevin Hall, Ground Floor, Local Government
House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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Resources Portfolio
21 April 2016

There will be a meeting of the Resources Portfolio at **1.00 pm on Thursday, 21 April 2016** Bevin Hall, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be available at 12.45pm in Bevin Hall.

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:

Frances Marshall
0207 664 3220 / frances.marshall@local.gov.uk

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Resources Portfolio – Membership 2015/2016

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (8)	
Cllr John Fuller (Vice Chairman)	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
Cllr Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Barry Wood (Observer)	Cherwell District Council
Substitutes	
Cllr May Haines	Borough of Poole
Cllr Andrew Leadbetter	Exeter City Council
Cllr Mary Malin	Kettering Borough Council
Cllr Rodney Rose	Oxfordshire County Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Claire Kober OBE (Chair)	Haringey Council
Cllr Sue Murphy CBE	Manchester City Council
Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County Council
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Sian Timoney	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Tom Beattie	Corby Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Norman Keats	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Clarence Barrett (Deputy Chair)	Havering London Borough Council
Cllr Linda Van den Hende	Havering London Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr Adrian Naylor	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Claire Hudson (Deputy Chair)	Mendip District Council
Cllr Simon Shaw	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr David Brown	Borough of Poole

Resources Portfolio – Attendance 2015/2016

Councillors	9/10/15
Conservative Group	
John Fuller	Yes
James Jamieson	Yes
Nigel Ashton	Yes
Melvyn Caplan	Yes
Roger Phillips	Yes
Adrian Hardman	No
David Renard	Yes
Labour Group	
Claire Kober OBE	Yes
Sue Murphy CBE	Yes
Aaron Shotton	No
Sharon Taylor OBE	Yes
Sian Timoney	Yes
Peter Marland	Yes
Tom Beattie	Yes
Independent	
Clarence Barrett	Yes
Linda van den Hende	Yes
Lib Dem Group	
Claire Hudson	Yes
Simon Shaw	Yes
Substitutes	
Andrew Leadbetter	Yes
Rodney Rose	Yes

Resources Portfolio

Thursday 21 April 2016

1.00 pm

Bevin Hall, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Item	Page	Time
1. Declarations of Interest		
2. Portfolio Review Workshop		1.00 - 1.50pm
a) Presentation		
Presentation by Cllr Claire Kober OBE, Member of the Governance Review Group & Resources Portfolio Chair.		
b) Break Out Session		
c) Feedback & Plenary Discussion		
3. Update on activity from each Portfolio Grouping		1.50pm - 2.30pm
a) Workforce - Cllr Clarence Barrett	1 - 2	
b) Welfare - Cllr Claire Hudson	3 - 4	
c) Strategic Finance & Infrastructure - Cllr John Fuller	5 - 6	
d) Local Government Finance - Cllr Claire Kober OBE	7 - 8	
4. Business Rates		2.30pm - 3.10pm
Joint presentation by LGA and Department for Communities and Local Government.		
5. Devolution Discussion		3.10pm - 3.30pm
Verbal update by Andrew Campbell (Associate Director, LGA).		

6. **Notes of the previous meeting** 9 - 15

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7. **Municipal Bonds Agency Briefing** 3.30pm - 4.00pm

Aidan Brady (Chief Executive) Local Capital Finance Company will be providing a briefing for Members of the Strategic Finance & Infrastructure Policy Grouping. All Portfolio Members are welcome to attend.

Work Programme Priorities: Workforce Activity to Date

Work Stream: Workforce	
Priority	Detail
Skills and Apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised profile of new LGA Skills Champion with councils through regional employer networks. • Responded to a Government consultation on apprenticeships. • Surveyed councils in early 2016 on their skill priorities. • Agreed actions for 2016 on raising awareness with members on Local Government workforce skills issues.
Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting government in interpreting and putting into context the 8 Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) asset pooling proposals submitted. • Continue to provide LGPS funds with a route to obtain clarification of requirements on pooling and access to government officials. • Liaising with DCLG and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to ensure that the retail status of Local Authorities under MiFID II from 2018 will be able to be effectively managed within the pools. • Will be providing support, but not a preferred solution, for pools working together on a national infrastructure framework. • Continue to influence government in order to manage expectations for the July proposals to meet the reality of what can be achieved within committee cycles.
The new National Living Wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently seeking responses from suppliers to carry out the initial research on the impact of the Living Wage. This will involve an analysis of existing research and interviews with a small sample of councils and other stakeholders. Later in the year we will arrange a roundtable event to consider both the outcome of the research and wider implications of the National Living Wage (NLW). • This work is a prelude to developing options for a new pay spine that meets the challenge of the likely level of the NLW by 2020, while remaining affordable. The national employers made a two year pay offer to the unions that sought to eat-in to the significant increases that need to be made by then. The aim of the new pay spine will be to do this and create a logical pay spine at the same time.

Work Stream: Workforce	
Priority	Detail
Employment law/TU reform, including the referendum on Europe and the impact on employment rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to a range government consultations (including those on the Trade Union Bill, the capping of exit payments for public servants and open recruitment). • The negotiated proposals for changing Britain's relationship with the EU do not in themselves have significant employment law impacts. Clearly a vote to leave would raise fresh questions about the impact on the UK's employment law framework and we will look at this, if the situation arises.
The integration of the health and social care workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending a number of Department of Health (DH) and NHS strategic workforce development forums to ensure outputs have effective focus on the local government context. • Preparing for launch of our "return to social work" resource aimed at linking registered social workers who are not practicing with current vacancies. • Funding the second phase of development of an apprenticeship route for family support workers in partnership with the Association of Directors of Childrens Services (ADCS). • Developed benchmark role profiles for new social care roles through the Job Evaluation Technical Working Group with the trade unions. • Published a guidance note with unions on use of market pay supplements which can be important in middle-upper ranks of social work/care specialist roles. • Taking part in a series of workshops aimed at improving approaches to shared workforce planning and behavioural change across organisations that are integrating services. • Other projects at an advanced stage or about to commence include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing a podcast focusing on the key workforce challenges faced by some pioneer sites for a wider HR audience. • Helping to develop a programme of case studies on workforce issues arising from the Better Care Fund. • Assisting Skills for Care in development of a career framework for care commissioners. • Working with Health Education England on a competency framework for those who assist people in managing their own care.

Work Programme Priorities: Welfare Reform Activity to Date

Work Stream: Welfare Reform	
Priority	Detail
<p>The role of councils in benefit administration is recognised and adequately resourced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This work is ongoing as Universal Credit (UC) is rolled out, mainly via the Local Authority Associations Group. • LGA continues to host the UC Partnership Forum and attend the UC Programme Board. • Regular meetings between the Chairman and Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, informed by Resources Portfolio Holders views. • Secured Housing Benefit (HB) administration subsidy for 2016/17, and supported negotiations on the distribution formula. • Supported councils with negotiation of their Partnership Agreements for UC roll-out and transition. • Ensured that adequate and appropriate New Burdens payments are made. • We will continue to discuss with councils and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) the current and future use of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), and this is also being fed into discussions regarding Business Rates retention. • Commissioned a short research project into DWP administration of disability benefits, to explore potential for localisation (as part of Business Rates work). To report by end of April.
<p>The role of councils in supporting Universal Credit (UC) claimants to make and maintain a claim is recognised and adequately resourced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made a written submission and gave evidence (Cllr Fuller) to the Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on Local Welfare. • Working closely with employment & skills colleagues on proposals for disadvantaged jobseekers; design and implementation of the Work and Health programme, and proposals for the future role of councils. • Secured £240 million over the remainder of the Parliament for Universal Support delivered locally.
<p>The experience of councils re: the impact of welfare reform on low income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held a National Welfare Conference in February 2016 chaired by Cllr Claire Hudson. • Commissioned research into impacts of the new raft of reforms being implemented by the current government, for completion

Work Stream: Welfare Reform	
Priority	Detail
households informs future policy development.	<p>Autumn 2016. This includes refreshing the current impacts tracker on LGInform and continued work with the authorities who attended the February conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr David Renard has been sharing Swindon's work on identifying and targeting households in need of additional support.
The central role of local government in supporting households affected by the reforms is recognised and adequately resourced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made a written submission and gave evidence (Cllr Fuller) to the Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on Local Welfare. • Proposals for local safety net funding included in LGA's Business Rates work. • Working with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on Pay to Stay and Temporary Accommodation management fee. • (Forthcoming) submission to Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on the future of Job Centre Plus (JCP) drawing on considerable work to date). • Ongoing lobbying on the application of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to supported accommodation.
Councils have the freedom, funding and flexibility to integrate services and to improve life chances for claimants through local approaches to employment, housing, social care, education and health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributed to the Housing Commission work stream on housing and employment. • Partnership working with employment & skills (see above). • Submission to joint Work & Pensions and Education Committee Inquiry on Life Chances (in partnership with Children and Young People Lead Members). • Working with DWP on the design of the Life Chances strategy. • Submission to Work & Pensions Committee Inquiry on Intergenerational Fairness. • Cllr Sue Murphy contributed to a recent Civitas round table on in-work progression, and is due to contribute to a forthcoming round table on the Work & Health programme.

Work Programme Priorities: Strategic Finance and Infrastructure Activity to Date

Work Stream: Strategic Finance and Infrastructure	
Priority	Activity to date
Housing Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working with Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board (EEHT) - e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contributed to housing workshop at annual LGA Finance Conference. ○ Provided evidence to the LGA's Housing Commission.
Infrastructure Finance/Local Growth Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided comments into the submission to Community Infrastructure Levy review (cleared by the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board). • Provided comments for submission for New Homes Bonus consultation (led by Finance work stream)
Financing arrangements for One Public Estate Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work led by Improvement and Innovation Board.
Capital Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held workshop with Barclays Bank, and Mills and Seed (lawyers) to investigate alternative approaches for councils to finance capital. • Held workshop with Moody's credit reference agency to research approaches to councils obtaining credit ratings and how different governance structures (e.g. combined authorities) might affect this. • Organised briefing with Municipal Bonds Agency (forthcoming).
European Funding including accessing European Investment Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranged workshop with representatives of European Commission to research sources of European funding and finance (postponed until after referendum).
Devolution Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of devolution and combined authority structures discussed at workshop with Moody's.

Work Programme Priorities: Local Government Finance Activity to Date

Work Stream: Local Government Finance	
Priority	Activity to date
Local Taxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured the move to full retention of business rates. Lead Members of the Portfolio will sit on the member level steering group which will oversee the LGA's work on the move to full retention. • Provided written evidence to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry on business rates retention. Cllr Kober also provided oral evidence. • Produced submissions to the Government's reviews of business rates administration, securing reform to the appeal process and a commitment to explore a self-assessment approach to business rates billing. • Sought legal advice on the NHS trust applications for charity business rates relief, supporting councils which received such applications with their response. • Through the Spending Review and local government finance settlement, secured further flexibility on council tax for social care authorities to help fund social care and for district councils with low council tax levels. • Submitted evidence to the independent review of council tax support led by Sir Eric Ollerenshaw.
Funding Outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated the LGA's on-the-day briefing on, and response to, the provisional 2016/17 local government finance settlement. This secured additional resources through transitional funding and a stop to negative revenue support grant until 2019/20. • Held the LGA's annual local government finance conference, chaired by Cllr Kober. It was attended by more than 100 delegates with a subsequent 100% satisfaction rating. • Coordinated the suite of LGA's Spending Review Submission reports, including support for a report on adult social care funding, and provided an on-the-day briefing as well as a media briefing session hosted by Cllr Taylor. • Produced the LGA's Budget submission and on-the-day briefing. • Responded to the Government's consultation on reforming the

Work Stream: Local Government Finance	
Priority	Activity to date
	<p>New Homes Bonus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to the Government's consultation on the Independent Living Fund grant. • Launched the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally strategy. • Responded to the Government's consultation on an updated formula for distributing the Public Health Grant. • In conjunction with Children and Young People, we have continued discussions with Department for Education (DfE) on the future of school funding.
Fiscal devolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured the move to full retention of business rates, including preparing the initial joint discussion papers published in partnership with the Government.

Note of last Resources Portfolio meeting

Title:	Resources Portfolio
Date:	Friday 9 October 2015
Venue:	Bevin Hall, Ground 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	Declarations of Interest No declarations were made.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 July The minutes of the previous meeting of the then Resources Board held on 17 July were agreed.	
3	Resources Portfolio Governance Pilot: A new way of working The Chair introduced the report by outlining the pilot governance model for the Resources Portfolio which Leadership Board had asked members' to trail and would be reviewed in April 2016.	
	Decisions That the Resources Portfolio: i. noted its membership and Portfolio Holder governance model; and ii. agreed its Terms of Reference.	
4	Break-Out Sessions: Work Programme Priorities for 2015-16 and working with other Boards Lead Members verbally outlined the suggested work programme priorities from within their respective Portfolio areas as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Claire Kober OBE Local Government Finance • Cllr John Fuller Strategic Finance and Growth • Cllr Clarence Barrett Workforce • Cllr Claire Hudson Welfare Portfolio Members then separated into four breakout groups to shape these priorities into an agreed work programme. The discussion notes from these discussions are as set out at <u>Appendix B</u> .	

Decision

The Resources Portfolio **agreed** that their discussion on the work programme priorities inform the development of the work programme to be signed off by Lead Members.

5 New Policy Institute Report on Council Tax Reform

Peter Kenway and Ines Newman from the New Policy Institute provided a powerpoint presentation on the background to the current of council tax arrangements and the case for reform.

In the discussion that followed, Members discussed the pros and cons of council tax reform, and on balance felt that it was not appropriate to pursue further at this point in time.

Decision

The Resources Portfolio **noted** the presentation on council tax reform by the New Policy Institute.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Claire Kober OBE	Haringey Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Clarence Barrett	Havering London Borough Council
	Cllr Claire Hudson	Mendip District Council
Members	Cllr Sue Murphy CBE	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Sian Timoney	Luton Borough Council
	Cllr Tom Beattie	Corby Borough Council
	Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
	Cllr Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Shaw	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Linda Van den Hende	Havering London Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County Council
	Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire County Council

Appendix B: Table Discussions on the Work Programme

a) Local Government Finance

1) Local taxation

The Key features of the Chancellor's announcement on 100% retention of business were outlined.

It was agreed that business rates and the move to 100% retention was the key local government finance priority and that the LGA should:

- Review what new responsibilities and existing specific grants could be incorporated in the baseline. This would be particularly important if the Government decides to announce the list in the forthcoming Spending Review; and
- Discuss with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) officials the key aspects of how the new system will work, ensuring that there is a balanced and collaborative relationship; work on the reform of business rates appeals, including taking forward the LGA's proposal for self-assessment.

2) Council tax

- Continue to with the LGA's existing lines on council tax.
- Subject to sufficient resource, charging council tax for land for which planning permission has been given could be considered as an area to work on.

3) Fiscal devolution

- Reference was made to the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance, however there was no discussion on this.

4) Business as usual

- It was recognised that work on the Local Government Finance Settlement, Budgets and Spending Reviews as well as the Future Funding Outlook were significant pieces of the work for the LGA.
- Members were keen to stress the importance of adult and children's social care funding; particularly looking at the match of responsibility to resources, in conjunction with other boards.

b) Strategic Finance for Growth, Infrastructure and Devolution

In introduction, the following areas were identified as falling within the remit of this work area:

- Housing Finance
- Infrastructure Finance/Local Growth Fund
- Financing arrangements for One Public Estate Programme

- Capital Finance
- European Funding

It was emphasised that work needs to concentrate on areas where the LGA can add value, and make sure links with other Boards work programme are understood to minimise overlap. The role of the Portfolio would be to identify issues, illustrate them, and propose solutions.

In discussion, a number of points were made, and suggestions made for areas for investigation and further work:

- In all areas members identified that local solutions will need to be identified for local needs. Different areas will face different problems and the solutions looked at need to reflect that. Some localities will not be able to benefit from some possible solutions (e.g. additional powers granted to mayors will not be available to areas without mayors, and the mayoral model may not be suitable for some areas).
- How can infrastructure schemes be developed so that they can be attractive for pension fund investment or investment by other such as the EU Investment bank. Will the pooling of pension fund investments announced recently have an effect on this? No pension fund will invest in any scheme that does not make an acceptable rate of return. The need to find mechanisms to fund infrastructure that will not generate a long term income stream was identified as a priority (tolls for roads? Flood works? Schools?).
- Members suggested some evaluation of the recently announced changes to business rates and opportunities for additions to rates may be relevant here; the changes to business rates will be picked up in the Local Government finance work stream.
- Can councils develop schemes to facilitate or enable private investment in infrastructure – e.g. by helping fund developers' cash flow?
- There is clear overlap with the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, particularly on Housing. The remit of this group needs to concentrate on the Housing finance and the mechanisms behind it. Members distinguished between the investment in infrastructure that enable building of new houses to take place and actual investment in new housing. Mechanisms proposed for investigation included the Housing Revenue Account ringfence, Community Infrastructure Levy, and Section 106 funding. Links to the LGA Housing Commission will be important and a way to channel the housing finance input. This group should focus on financial impact of proposed or potential change in relation to housing policy

considering impact, evidence and options/solutions and will need to feed this into policy work.

- Are there untapped opportunities from EU funding and the One Public Estate programme?

c) **Workforce**

It was agreed that Cllr Clarence Barrett (Deputy Portfolio Holder) would be the overarching spokesperson for the Workforce Portfolio.

The following five areas were agreed as the key work strands within the Workforce remit. The work programme was agreed as set out in the report, with members providing the below steer on specific pieces of work, or a particular focus required, to take the work programme forward.

Skills and Apprenticeships

- Cllr Linda Van den Hende to retain Skills Champion role appointed at the July Board.
- As part of this Cllr Linda Van den Hende would canvass Regional Employers bodies and Resources Portfolio members as an intelligence gathering exercise. Unions were also recognised as a useful source of intelligence – i.e. learning agreements, union learn, workforce development etc.
- This work to be a combination of business as usual as well as exploring intersections between National Living Wage, productivity and service redesign.
- Whilst the focus would be on employed individuals, links should also be made to the skills and employment work being undertaken by the City Regions and People and Places Boards.
- The need to strengthen elected member leadership and engagement in strategic HR issues such as organisational design and culture was emphasised. Utilising the Regional Employers bodies to support this was suggested.

Pensions

- The political challenge of pension reform was highlighted. Members would have a key role in coordinating at a political level.
- There was an important role for members in working with the pension schemes and Government to achieve efficiencies and to help add value – i.e. explore cost benefits of pooling; and negotiate with HMT on an realistic approach to deficit management.

The new National Living Wage

- The responsibility for this mainly sits with the National Joint Council. The Portfolio's focus would be on the redesign of jobs and achieve value for money.

Employment Law and Trade Union Reform

- This areas was not so much a deliverable but to keep Members abreast of employment law changes and implications of Trade Union reform – i.e. referendum on Europe and the impact on employment rights.
- Exploratory work to understand the value of check-off arrangements between trade unions and employers.

The integration of the health and social care workforce

- A specific Member lead on this area would be beneficial.

d) **Welfare**

Much of the LGA's activity has been related to the adequacy of local authority funding to administer and deliver welfare. The LGA also has helped to highlight and respond to some of the unintended consequences of government welfare policies which directly or indirectly affect local authorities and shift costs onto local authority services. The supporting role of local authorities' in Universal Credit has also been an important area of LGA activity.

Whilst these issues are still very important, it was suggested that there is now a need to shift focus as reforms in the area of housing and housing benefit are implemented and the effects of cuts in tax credits and the introduction of the living wage become clearer. It was suggested that the LGA should take a fresh and wider look at the impacts on councils, residents and the local economy. The cumulative impact of welfare reforms on the disabled and other vulnerable and poorer members of society will need to be considered.

Linked to this, there is also need to look at how councils can respond positively to the current challenges by linking up services, and working with partners locally to help people manage their money effectively, and meet their housing costs. The importance of employment and skills support was highlighted. This should involve collaboration with relevant partners, to innovate and locally design and commission assistance to help move people into stable employment, and improve their prospects for in-work progression. The role of Jobcentres and how this might be more effectively delivered was also discussed.

Some of this work aligns well with the theme of improving people's life chances, and improving social mobility. At times of crisis the safety net provided by local authorities provides essential support. The LGA's role in making the case for maintaining the discretionary funding which forms this safety net was noted.

Some more detailed work streams reflecting the above themes were outlined as follows: -

- The role of councils in benefit administration is recognised and adequately resourced including reference to housing benefit staffing, the recovery of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments further to Universal Credit (UC) roll out, and securing sufficient HB administration subsidy.
- The role of councils in supporting UC claimants to make and maintain a claim is recognised and adequately resourced as part of Universal Support delivered locally.
- The experience of councils of the impact of welfare reform on low income households informs future policy development including the effect of DWP sanctions and the fear and vulnerability this creates.
- The central role of local government in supporting households affected by the reforms is recognised and adequately resourced.
- Councils have the freedom, funding and flexibility to integrate services and to improve life chances for claimants through local approaches to employment, housing, social care, education, childcare and health.

Four key areas were highlighted which the elected members present expressed an interest in;

- Housing issues and affordability
- Employment and skills and the work programme
- Families impacts and the role of job centres
- Public health

LGA location map

Local Government Association

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 Smith Square
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Tel: 020 7664 3131
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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

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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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