

Note of last LGA Leadership Board meeting

Title: LGA Leadership Board
Date: Wednesday 11 April 2018
Venue: Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

Item Decisions and actions

1 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nick Forbes, Cllr Paul Carter CBE, Cllr Sean Anstee, and Cllr Peter Reeve MBE.

2 General Assembly 3 July 2018: Outline Programme

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Services, introduced the report which set out the draft agenda for the 2018 General Assembly to be held at the LGA's annual conference and exhibition in Birmingham on 3 July 2018.

Members noted that member authorities had been asked to submit any motions to the General Assembly by 2 May, and on 7 June the LGA Executive would decide on which would be debated by the General Assembly. It was also noted that the General Assembly would endorse the next decision on the new LGA company at the meeting in July.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** the proposed agenda for the 2018 General Assembly.

3 LGA Proportionality for 2018-19

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Services, introduced the report which set out the timetable for confirming changes to LGA proportionality, as well as agreement of allocation of Chairs and Vice-Chairs and seats on governance structures, following the local government elections on 3 May 2018. It was confirmed that the new proportionality figures would include all changes as a result of elections, including any by-elections.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** the LGA proportionality process and timetable for 2018.

4 Pay Policy Statement

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Services, introduced the report which set out changes to the LGA's Pay Policy Statement. Amendments for 2018 included updates to the pension contribution rates; clarification of policy on non-standard grades and spot salaries; amendment to how senior salaries were published; and clarification of the process for temporary appointments.

Members requested that more detailed wording be included in the Statement to reflect the LGA's policy on relocation expenses and special reward payments.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board:

- a) **Approved** the LGA Pay Policy Statement and noted the inclusion of the updated pension contribution rates;
- b) **Agreed** that additional wording be included to reflect the LGA's policy on relocation expenses and special reward payments; and
- c) **Noted** that the next annual review was scheduled for April 2019.

Action

Pay Policy Statement to be updated in line with Members' comments and published.
(Claire Holloway)

5 Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Update

Nicola Morton, Head of Local Government Finance, introduced the report which set out a number of updates on the LGA's work related to the Fair Funding Review and business rates retention reform. This included work on the delivery of the LGA's additional Fair Funding Review work programme, including the assessment of how relative needs changed over time, relative needs assessment models, and modelling of transition options. The report also included updates on the commissioning of a business rates retention model, and the work of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Task and Finish Group.

Members noted that the proposed template for evaluating future Fair Funding Review proposals made by the Government or other stakeholders was based on a range of criteria and would be produced for all authorities. It was also noted that the Task and Finish Group had proposed that population data projections be used to in the relative needs formulae; these would be updated, and would reflect need and provide certainty to local authorities, while also being understandable to residents.

Leadership Board were asked for approval to use LGA reserves to commission and fund work on an LGA business rates retention model, which could be used by the LGA and shared with member authorities.

Members also noted that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had recently published a written statement setting out an error made in calculating the size of allocations of the specific grant to compensate local authorities for caps of the business rates multiplier. This would impact 2017/18 and 2018/19 business rate retention pilot areas.

In the discussion which followed, Members raised the following points:

- Members welcomed the progress which had been made over recent months. It was highlighted that MHCLG was speaking to District Councils on the tier split, and further consideration would need to be given to how this would work in London, and with the mayoral model. It was confirmed that the split would be wider than counties and districts, and the LGA's model would acknowledge that point. London Councils were represented on all working groups with MHCLG, and the LGA continued to liaise with them on a monthly basis.
- Regarding the evaluation form, Members queried if local residents would understand how the funding level was arrived at.
- Members supported the view of the Task and Finish Group that population projections should be used to develop the relative needs formulae, although it was noted that there were other demographic pressures. It was confirmed that this would take into account all population elements, and would reflect different age groups.

Decisions

The LGA Leadership Board:

- a) **Noted** the update on the LGA's Fair Funding Review business rates retention work programme;
- b) **Approved** the proposed template for evaluating future Fair Funding Review proposals made by the Government or other stakeholders;
- c) **Endorsed** the view of the Task and Finish Group to support the use of population projections in the relative needs formulae;
- d) **Delegated** to the LGA Chairman and Group Leaders the sign-off of the final version of the relative needs and relative council tax models;
- e) **Approved** the use of LGA reserves for the commissioning of a business rates retention model; and
- f) **Noted** the forward plan of meetings of the LGA Fair Funding Review and Business rates Retention Task and Finish Group.

6 Communications Report (October 2017 to March 2018)

David Holdstock, Director of Communications, introduced the report which provided an update on the LGA's communications activity and progress with corporate campaigns between October 2017 and March 2018.

Members noted that 38 pieces of written and oral evidence had been submitted to parliamentary inquiries, and 53 briefings had been given for Parliamentary debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Following the launch of the new LGA website in 2017 page views had increased by 12%, and visitors had spent more time on pages which indicated that they were able to find the information they were looking for in the first instance. This work had saved the organisation £60,000 per year.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** the communications activity for the period October 2017 to March 2018.

7 LGA Perceptions Survey 2017/18

David Holdstock, Director of Communications, introduced the report which provided the Leadership Board with a summary of the findings of the annual perceptions survey of the LGA's membership. Members noted that this was the sixth consecutive year that

the survey had been undertaken, and that an action plan to support key findings had been developed for the Leadership Board's approval.

Highlights of the survey included an 8% rise in satisfaction with the LGA's sector-led improvement offer, and a 2% rise in the LGA's value for money. There had been a 3% reduction in keeping the membership informed about the LGA's work, and this would be addressed through the action plan. There was, however, a high awareness of the LGA's work among Council Leaders and Chief Executives.

The LGA activities which were found to be most useful were the provision of a single voice for local government (+3% from 2016), and the provision of advice and information through the political group offices (+3% from 2016). There was a drop in negotiating national pay (-6%) but although the LGA provided support for this function it was undertaken independently.

In the discussion which followed the following points were raised by Members:

- There was a -4% drop in provision of conferences and events, but it was hoped that now the LGA was back in refurbished premises at 18 Smith Square, with new conference facilities, this would increase again next year.
- It was confirmed that the responses were taken from a random sample of groups from the LGA's membership.
- It was suggested that interested parties would be shortly reminded of their subscriptions to various LGA bulletins as part of work on GDPR legislation, and this would mean bulletins would be better targeted to their audiences.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board:

- a) **Noted** the results of the 2017/18 perceptions survey; and
- b) **Agreed** the draft action plan.

8 Chief Executive's Report - April 2018

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, introduced the report which set out the LGA's main achievements against the Business Plan since the last meeting in March 2018. He drew particular attention to: issues around local elections in 2019 and Brexit, the National Audit Office report on financial sustainability of councils, the Government's announcement of £30m investment to tackle rough sleeping, sector-led improvement for children's services, the Adult Social Care Green Paper, and the local government pay settlement.

Members agreed that the report was useful in providing an overview of the LGA's work, particularly work to support councils, and suggested that it be circulated to a wider audience.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** the Chief Executive's report for April 2018.

9 LGA Forward Plan

The Chairman introduced the Forward Plan, which set out the agendas for the LGA Leadership Board, LGA Executive and the Councillors' Forum for the next three months.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** the Forward Plan.

10 Note of the last meeting

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2018.

11 Minutes of the Board of Directors of LGA

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board, as the Board of Directors of the Local Government Association, **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2018.

12 LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition Forward Planning

David Holdstock, Director of Communications, introduced the report which set out options and prices for venues which could be used for the LGA conference and exhibition between 2021 and 2023. It was noted that options balanced geographical location with cost, and that all suggested preferences were suitable for the scale of the conference and exhibition.

It was highlighted that the ICC in Birmingham had been suggested for 2022, but as Birmingham was due to host the Commonwealth Games in 2022 the costs would be higher for the LGA and for delegates. Following discussion Members decided that it would be better to hold the conference and exhibition in Harrogate International Centre in 2022. It was also agreed that the conference would be held in Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre in 2021, and Bournemouth International Centre in 2023.

Decision

The Leadership Board agreed that the LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition should be held at Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre in 2021, Harrogate International Centre in 2022, and Bournemouth International Centre in 2023.

Action

Conference venues to be booked as agreed. **(David Holdstock)**.

13 Committee on Standards in Public Life Review of Local Government Ethical Standards Developing an LGA Response

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, presented the report and highlighted that in January 2018 the Committee on Standards in Public Life had launched a review of local government ethical standards. The report set out a potential starting point for the LGA's response to the review, based on the LGA's previous response to the Casey Review.

Members noted that initial feedback had been sought from the LGA's Political Groups and Group Leaders. Regarding the disqualification process for councillors, the LGA had previously strongly advocated for parity of approach between holders of different types of elected office, and it did not make sense for there to be more stringent standards to apply to councillors compared to Members of Parliament, Members of the European

Parliament, or Police and Crime Commissioners. There currently appeared to be more issues occurring at Town and Parish Council level. The Committee were also seeking the LGA's views on harassment of councillors, and what the LGA could do to promote best practice.

The final response would be cleared by the Chairman and Group Leaders before submission to the Committee.

In the discussion that followed Members raised the following points:

- The split in complaints against Town and Parish Councillors and councillors from other local government structures was evident.
- There was also an evident increase in intimidation and harassment against local elected representatives, particularly female councillors and MPs, and the response from local police was often lacking. Cases where there had been serious breaches were investigated, but these often took a long time. The police should have a better understanding of local government and how it interfaced with criminal law.
- Current sanctions which could be raised against councillors, available locally for failure to comply with local codes, were considered to be effective. The role of a councillor was very different to the role of an MP, and there was an argument for them to be treated differently.
- The LGA should be robust in defending the sector against disqualification by unelected officials. The option of recall elections for local councillors, in the same way as MPs could be recalled, could be investigated further.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** the report and noted that comments would be taken into account as part of the LGA's response to the review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Action

LGA response to be drafted and cleared by the Chairman and Group Leaders prior to submission (**Ellie Greenwood**).

14 Layden House Update

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Services, provided the Leadership Board with an update on progress with the refurbishment of Layden House. The Leadership Board had appointed Gilbert Ash as the main contractor in October 2017, and they had subsequently stripped the building. Unfortunately there were some delays in Transport for London's response to the LGA's licence application, and London Borough of Islington's final planning approvals.

Members noted that the contractor has unearthed some vaults underneath Turks Head Yard, some of which extended beyond the boundaries of the Layden House site, and there would be a further delay whilst licences to fill the void were negotiated. The LGA was working closely with Cushman and Wakefield on marketing of the building, and a brand consultant had been appointed to create a marketing brochure. It was hoped that a single tenant would be secured for the office floors, in addition to the ground floor retail and restaurant tenancies. The date for sign off on funding of the project by Westminster City Council had been delayed pending the formal adoption of Articles of Association for LGMB.

Members also noted progress with 18 Smith Square. Most major issues since the LGA had moved back into the building had been addressed, but discussions around boiler performance and heating in some areas, and AV equipment in Bevin Hall were still ongoing. The first floor of the building had been fully let, and the NFU were currently fitting out their office space. Viewings of the second and third floors were ongoing.

Decision

The LGA Leadership Board **noted** the updates regarding Layden House and 18 Smith Square.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Porter of Spalding CBE	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairmen	Cllr David Simmonds CBE Cllr Howard Sykes MBE Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Lincolnshire County Council
Deputy-Chairmen	Cllr Sue Murphy CBE Cllr Peter Box CBE Cllr Michael Payne Cllr Lib Peck Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE Cllr Peter Fleming OBE Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Manchester City Council Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Gedling Borough Council Lambeth London Borough Council Sutton London Borough Council Sevenoaks District Council Warwickshire County Council
Apologies	Cllr Nick Forbes Cllr Sean Anstee Cllr Paul Carter CBE Cllr Peter Reeve MBE	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council Kent County Council Huntingdonshire District Council