

Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date:	Thursday 19 October 2017
Venue:	5th Floor Conference Suite, 5th Floor (South side), 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	Action
1	Welcome, apologies and declarations of Interest The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Local government, migration and immigration - the Rt. Hon. Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Immigration The Chairman welcomed the Rt. Hon. Brandon Lewis MP, Minister for Immigration, to the meeting and thanked him for agreeing to speak to members. The Minister thanked Councillors for the work they had done so far in supporting refugees through the Syrian vulnerable person resettlement programme (VPR) and he emphasised the benefits of having strong local leadership, as well as a good working relationship between central and local government. He discussed Brexit and advised members that the Government was clear that it wanted EU nationals already living in the UK legally to be able to remain here, while also protecting British citizens living abroad. The Minister touched on the immigration system and the importance of ensuring it works best for the country, while also noting the need to carry out a detailed assessment of migration from the EU. He praised participating local authorities and said that the UK was on track to honour its commitment to resettling 20,000 refugees under this scheme by 2020, but also said that the Government was keen to see more support for the children's resettlement scheme. The Minister thanked local authorities for their responses to the funding review and explained that the Home Office would do what it can to make additional resources available to help manage migration and integration within local communities. He emphasised that the UK remains committed to playing its part to support refugees via international aid and resettlement schemes, but noted the ongoing need to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees. The Government was due to publish its integration strategy in autumn	

2017 and the Minister was keen for councils to continue engaging with the Government on how to ensure resettlement offers work best for all.

The Minister was not able to stay after his speech so Cllr David Simmonds, Chair of the LGA's Asylum Refugee and Migration Task and Finish Group, led a brief discussion and assured members he would put any questions they had to the Minister at a meeting of the Task and Finish Group on 26 October.

The following points were made:

- Members welcomed the Minister's comments on dealing with homelessness and rough sleeping caused, in part, by a number of people having no recourse to public funds. Cllr Simmonds noted that a more detailed conversation about this particular issue would be had at the meeting of the Task and Finish Group.
- Concerns were raised about councils being unwilling to resettle children due to the cost of taking on private healthcare fees. Cllr Simmonds agreed with this and said that unfunded costs were the main reason councils had so far been reluctant to participate in the resettlement scheme.
- Members noted that many councils were having problems with HMOs being set up illegally and they emphasised the pressure this was causing to the population of effected areas. Concerns were raised about planning departments rejecting applications only to have their decisions overturned by the Planning Inspectorate. Cllr Simmonds said that legislation had been changed to allow councils to take more robust action against landlords housing people who were in the UK illegally but that the wider issue was the level of interaction between housing departments and the immigration system. He said that the contracts used by the Home Office to procure accommodation were effectively a race to the bottom and was leading to asylum seekers being placed in the cheapest available accommodation, which was often owned by slum landlords. The Minister said that these contracts were due to be re-procured around the end of November and Cllr Simmonds assured members that the Task and Finish Group would provide ample evidence to the Minister as to why contracts need to be procured to a much higher standard.

The Chairman thanked both the Minister and Cllr Simmonds, and the discussion was drawn to a close.

3 Appendix A: Biography of the Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP

4 Chairman's Update

The Chairman introduced his Update and noted that he had attended a roundtable meeting with the Prime Minister that week on housing. He told members that the meeting was productive and that it was made clear during the meeting that the fault of the housing crisis did not lay with local government.

Members **noted** the Chairman's Update.

5 LGA Boards & Portfolio Chair's Reports

The Chairman listed the Chair's reports.

Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, Cllr Izzi Seccombe, noted that the NCAS Conference had taken place the week prior to the Councillors' Forum and that many authorities had received communications from the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government. Cllr Seccombe spoke to members briefly about the view that the LGA should take a strong line on the Better Care Fund and she suggested that it would be helpful if authorities could provide information to help build a case for unilateral action to be taken by the health sector.

The Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board told members that 150 peer challenges had been booked for this year but that more could be arranged if members wanted them.

Members **noted** the Board Chairs'/Chairmen's reports.

6 Digest of the last meeting

Members noted that those who were not appointed members of the Councillors' Forum did not appear on the attendee list from the previous meeting.

Aside from the attendee list, members **agreed** the notes of the last meeting as an accurate summary of the discussion.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Members	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
	Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council

Cllr Peter Golds	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr John Hart	Devon County Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Donna Jones JP	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Geoffrey Theobald	Brighton & Hove City Council
OBE	
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Sue Murphy CBE	Manchester City Council
Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Cllr Jon Clempner	Harlow District Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Sabia Hussain	Slough Borough Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Cllr Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
Cllr Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Cllr Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Debbie Wilcox	Newport City Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Alan Connett	Devon County Council
Cllr Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Peter Reeve MBE	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr Alan Seldon	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Wayne Davies	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Cllr Carolyn Rule	Cornwall Council
Cllr Chris Townsend	Surrey County Council
Cllr Lisa Duffy	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr Robert Bucke	Tendring District Council

Apologies

Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Rory Love	Shepway District Council
Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Stephen Parnaby	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
OBE	
Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Catherine Rankin	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Cllr Colin Riley
Mayor Tim Bowles
Cllr Rishi Shori
Cllr Alice Perry
Cllr Aaron Shotton
Cllr Timothy Swift
Cllr Graham Chapman
Cllr Anne Western CBE
Ms Fiona Twycross AM

Cllr Amy Cross
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE
Cllr Barrie Grunewald
Cllr Paul Tilsley CBE
Cllr Richard Kemp CBE
Cllr Abigail Bell
Cllr Keith Aspden

In attendance

Cllr Mike Wilcox
Cllr John Clarke
Cllr Jo Beavis
Cllr Beverley Egan
Cllr Phelim MacCafferty
Cllr Shabir Pandor
Cllr Tom Beattie
Cllr Liz Hazell
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
Cllr Paul Smith
Cllr Geoff Knight
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha
Cllr Chris Saint
Cllr Stephen Parker
Cllr Terry O'Neill

Castle Point Borough Council
West of England Combined Authority
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Islington Council
Flintshire County Council
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Nottingham City Council
Derbyshire County Council
London Fire and Emergency Planning
Authority (LFEPA)
Blackpool Council
Plymouth City Council
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Liverpool City Council
Hull City Council
North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

Lichfield District Council
Gedling Borough Council
Essex County Council
Castle Point Council
Brighton & Hove City Council
Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Corby Borough Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Sutton London Borough Council
Colchester Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Stratford-upon-Avon District Council
Hart District Council
Warrington Council

****Please note that you must sign the attendance list in order for your attendance to be registered. If you have any queries about this, please contact the Member Services team: ms@local.gov.uk.***