

Note of last LGA Executive meeting

Title:	LGA Executive
Date:	Thursday 7 December 2017
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.</p> <p>He notified members of the passing of Cllr Paul Watson, the representative for the Association of the North East Councils. Cllr Simon Henig, would be standing in as the ANEC representative until a new Chair was appointment in April 2018.</p>	
2	LGA response to the Casey Review: Opportunity and Integration	
	<p>Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report. Dame Louise Casey's review of integration and opportunity was published in December 2016 (one year ago), and discussed by the Safer and Stronger Communities Board in January 2017. Following that discussion, Dame Louise attended an Executive meeting in March 2017 to give an overview of the review and the key findings in relation to councils.</p> <p>The LGA's draft response (attached), focused on the welfare agenda, housing, segregation and issues around education, and called for greater powers for local authorities in delivering the inclusive growth agenda. It also made suggestions on what the Government could do to implement the review. He asked members to comment on the response.</p> <p>In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There had been no mention of closer engagement with Police and Crime Commissioners. Members emphasised there was an opportunity to create a link here.• There was a discussion on the difficulties of influencing exclusions from schools and on the limited impact councils had on admission policies. Members emphasised that councils needed to work with regional schools commissioners in this area.	

Item Decisions and actions

Action

- Members briefly discussed what central government could do to take the findings of review forward.
- There was a discussion around standards boards. Members agreed there should be a consistent standard for all those that ran for elected office. The difficulties of removing individuals in public office who had subsequently gained a criminal record or had been added to the sexual offenders register was raised.
- It was emphasised that political parties should have a role in maintaining standards.
- Members briefly discussed concerns on home schooling and how to control the quality of this.
- Members highlighted problems with poverty and suggested the Government needed to think about long-term problems with social and economic integration.
- It was suggested that social and economic problems were wider than those highlighted in the review, and that a sense of alienation in towns in the north of England and isolated communities across the country were key issues. The wider picture needed to be considered.
- Education and its link with skills was discussed. Employers needed to have people with the correct skills to fill their roles.
- There was a brief discussion on the housing shortage and ways to persuade developers to build.
- It was emphasised that there were practical things local government could do to promote better cohesion, such as helping to ensure there was more choice in the housing market.
- Members thanked Cllr Simon Blackburn for leading on work in this area.

Decision

1. Members **approved** the draft response.

Actions

1. Officers to take work forward as directed by members.

Item Decisions and actions

Action

3 Autumn Budget

Sarah Pickup, Deputy Chief Executive, introduced the report, highlighting key announcements in the 2017 Autumn Budget and the implications for local government. She discussed the proposed sanctions for those councils without a local plan in place, and highlighted the lack of reference to business rates retention, the fair funding review, adult and children's social care and replacement structural funds.

She referred to activity at the LGA in response to the budget, including the budget submission and the on-the-day briefing, which had had a high number of downloads. She advised that officers were now awaiting the Local Government Finance Settlement.

In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- It was highlighted that the budget had made limited provision for local government. Members raised concerns that children's social care and adult social care had not been mentioned at all, and emphasised that the Government needed to continue to be pushed on this.
- There was a brief discussion on the devolution framework going forward. It was highlighted that there had not yet been a response from the Communities Secretary on the ask for a Leicestershire Combined Authority.
- Whilst members emphasised that the announcement on the housing borrowing cap was welcome, they suggested that the LGA needed to continue to lobby on this issue. There was also a discussion on councils being able to control their own rents on social housing.
- Local plans and the powers Government had to put these on hold were referred to. Concerns were raised that localism was being undermined.
- Members discussed business rates, and the reduction in core grants councils had taken on the basis that the income from business rates would increase. This was still an outstanding problem.
- Concerns were raised over the trust local residents had for councils, regarding high funding of some services though they served a small section of the population. In comparison, other services, which served a larger percentage of the population, received limited funds.
- It was suggested that the Government needed to be pressed to fund the lifting of the public sector pay cap.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
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- Members emphasised that it was difficult for councils to plan if they continued to be uncertain about what finances they would receive. This raised questions over the viability of local government.

Decision

1. Members **noted** the report.

Action

1. Officers to proceed with work in line with members' steer.

4 The Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention

Nicola Morton, Head of Programmes, introduced the report, updating members on the Government's Fair Funding Review and business rates retention reforms.

She advised that officers were waiting for the fair funding review consultation to be published. The LGA had been working jointly with DCLG in this area, and she updated members on the activity of the joint DCLG / LGA Steering group and Technical Working Groups. Business rate appeals were discussed, as was whether there would be more business rates retention pilots going forward.

In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- Members emphasised that there needed to be a clear and transparent formula which all councils accepted. It was suggested that consensus should be built in areas which did not need primary legislation or Government intervention.
- Members discussed the delay in implementing business rate retention, and touched on the implications for councils if large businesses in their areas closed down.
- There was a discussion on funding new burdens such as the National Minimum Wage, and it was suggested that these might impact disproportionately on some geographic areas. It was emphasised that new burdens should be funded properly by Government.
- There was a discussion on the problem of an annual budget process with Government, which left little room for manoeuvre. It would be beneficial to have a period of stability and the opportunity to do things differently.

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Decision

1. Members **noted** the report.

Action

1. Officers to revise the work plan based on the discussion.

7 Note of last LGA Executive meeting

The notes of the last meeting were **agreed** as an accurate summary of the discussion.

Item Decisions and actions

Action

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice-Chair)	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr David Simmonds CBE (Vice Chairman)	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Howard Sykes MBE (Vice-Chair)	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE	Sutton London Borough Council
	Cllr Lisa Duffy	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Barrie Grunewald	North West Regional Leaders Board
	Cllr Nicolas Heslop	South East England Councils (SEEC)
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
	Cllr Lib Peck	Lambeth London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Reeve MBE	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr Nicholas Rushton	East Midlands Councils
	Cllr Aaron Shotton	Welsh Local Government Assoc. (WLGA)
	Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
	Cllr Michael Wilcox	West Midlands LGA
Apologies:	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	County Councils Network (CCN)
	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	East of England Local Government Association (EELGA)
	Cllr John Fuller	District Councils Network
	Cllr John Hart	South West Councils
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
	Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	SIGOMA
	Cllr Anthony Hunt	Welsh Local Government Assoc. (WLGA)
	Cllr Donna Jones JP	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Claire Kober OBE	Haringey LB and Resources Board
	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council and City Regions Board
	Cllr Sue Murphy CBE	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH)
	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
	Alderman Sir David Wootton	Local Partnerships