

Note of last Resources Board meeting

Title: Resources Board
Date: Wednesday 7 January 2015
Venue: Westminster Suite, 8th 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	Welcome and Declarations of Interest	
	The Chair opened the meeting and noted the apologies that had been received. No declarations of interests were made.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 October 2014	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed subject to the amendment that reference be made to the discussion on pensions that took place during the 'Independent Commission on Local Government Finance' item. Disappointment was also expressed that the invitation to attend the Commission's themed stakeholder engagement workshops had not been extended to Board members.	
4	Strategic Issues in Local Government Pay (CONFIDENTIAL)	
	A confidential discussion took place.	
5	Workforce Update	
	Sarah Messenger (Head of Workforce) briefly introduced the report which updated on: pay; negotiations; pensions; workforce strategy; and consultancy. In doing so, she paid particular attention to launch a new career guide which encourages young people to think about a career in local government.	
	In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Members highlighted the significant achievement of reaching a local government pay offer for 2015/16 and that this should be recognised by Government.Changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations that will enable elected members to sit on Local Pension Board were welcomed, with particular reference made to the importance of this 'local scrutiny'.	

- With reference to the potential shape of local government in five years' time, Members welcomed the timely creation of a career guide as a recruitment tool to attract new talent into local government. In addition to this, the importance of continuing to support the creation of apprenticeships was also highlighted.
- In discussing the Local Government Pension Schemes, the added value of local investment schemes was highlighted. Concerns were expressed that the creation of a Welsh Local Government Pension Fund could have a detrimental impact on this within Wales.

Decision

The Resources Board noted the report and asked that their views inform the development of the work programme.

6 Municipal Bonds Agency (CONFIDENTIAL)

A confidential discussion took place.

7 The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2015-16

The Chair briefly introduced the report which updated on the LGA's activity on the 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement and summarised the headline issues from within the Settlement.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Members suggested the LGA's response to the settlement consultation be contextualised within the wider long term debate on devolution and public service reform. Particular reference was made to the ability of the sector to deliver better outcomes and provide value for money through expand its role in areas such as welfare.
- With reference to the Government's misleading presentation of the funding reduction to local government, Members emphasised the importance of being more robust in articulating the implications of the continuing funding reductions on vital frontline services. They also highlighted the need to help Government understand the diversity of circumstance within the sector.
- Whilst Members emphasised the need for clarity on future of the New Homes Bonus (NHB), they emphasised the need for a finance system that more effectively incentives growth.
- There was support for making a strong argument that Government set off all business rates appeal losses from before April 2013 against the old national business rates pool. Following comments

made by the Minister at the LGA's recent Finance Conference, cautious optimism was expressed that the Minister was alive to the issue.

- With reference to the significant added value provided by local welfare assistance schemes, Members highlighted the need to continue to lobby Government to revise its decision to include funding for local welfare from within the existing core grant.
- There was support for continuing to push for clarity regarding Deprivation of Liberty and the need for Government to fund this new burden.

Decision

The Resources Board asked that their comments inform the LGA's response to the 2015-16 Local Government Finance Settlement consultation which would be signed off by the Resources Board Lead Members.

8 European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 Update

Cllr Roger Philips, having attended the most recent meeting of the Programme Growth Board, introduced the report which summarised LGA activity to influence EU funding for 2014 – 2020 and invited the Board's steer on next steps. He updated on the latest negotiations between the sector, Government and the European Commission, and welcomed the positive working relationship between the LGA and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Network.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments, including:

- Serious concerns were expressed at the delay in the programmes going live and the implication this would have for projects on the ground.
- With reference to a current council-run ESF cofinancing programme, it was noted that locally funded and managed projects can deliver greater value for money, better outcomes and add value.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the accountability and transparency of LEPs, particularly in relation to local government representation, as well as concerns regarding varying levels of capacity to deliver.

Decision

The Board noted the update and agreed the further actions set out in the report.

9 Welfare Reform Update

Paul Raynes (Head of Environment, Localism and Welfare) introduce the report which updated on the latest developments on welfare reform, including: Local Welfare Assistance fund; housing benefit administration subsidy; discretionary housing payment; and Universal Credit (UC).

In the discussion that followed, Members asked for an update on local authority Discretionary Housing Payment spend and discussed the latest progress with regards to Universal Credit.

Decision

The Resources Board note the update.

Action

Circulate update on Discretionary Housing Payment spend to Board Members.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Claire Kober	Haringey Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Clarence Barrett	Havering London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County 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 John Osman	Somerset County Council
	Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
	Cllr Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City Council
	Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire County Council
	Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Barbara Janke	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Linda van den Hende	Havering London Borough Council
	Cllr Harvey Siggs	National Association of Regional Employers
	Cllr David Phillips	Welsh Local Government Assoc. (WLGA)
Apologies	Cllr Sue Murphy	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Chris Shaw	North East Lincolnshire Council
	Cllr Claire Hudson	Mendip District Council
	Cllr Denny Vitty	Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)