

## Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

---

**Title:** Councillors' Forum  
**Date:** Thursday 22 July 2021  
**Venue:** Online via Zoom

---

### Attendance

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

| Item | Decisions and actions   | Action |
|------|---|--------|
| 1    | <p><b>Chairman's Welcome</b></p> <p>Cllr James Jamieson (The Chairman) welcomed members to the meeting and gave a brief reminder best practice in remote meetings</p>   |        |
| 2    | <p><b>Discussion on Social Care</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited Cllr David Fothergill (Chairman - Economy, Environment, Housing &amp; Transport Board) to introduce the discussion on social care.</p> <p>David noted that adult &amp; children's social care is a major challenge for authorities with long running policy and funding issues. He then invited Stephen Chandler (President – Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) to present on the ADASS Spring Survey. Stephen noted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The survey focused on budget and policy issues facing local authorities.</li><li>- The COVID-19 pandemic continued to drive demand for services above expectations.</li><li>- Over 2021/22 local authorities were forecast to spend £16 billion on adult social care, accounting for 36.9% of total spending nationwide. There was a £1.15 billion funding gap in 2020/21, exacerbated by a circa £200 million shortfall.</li><li>- The one-off short term funding to cover COVID-19 services had masked existing and long-term funding problems in 2020/21. Councils were also relying heavily on reserves and the Social Care Precept to meet funding needs.</li><li>- The demographics of adults accessing support have changed with increased spending on adults of working age. Directors of Adult Services (DAS) were also seeing increased engagement with homelessness and domestic violence cases.</li></ul> |        |

- The survey measured the confidence of DAS in delivering services in the year ahead.
  - o 21% were fully confident of meeting their statutory duties
  - o 79% had no or partial confidence on their budgets meeting statutory duties
  - o 40% were most concerned on their ability to provide care and support for work age adults, while 3% worried most about services for older people.
- Based on responses there were significant waiting times for adult services. Over 75,000 were waiting for a care assessment or review, with a further 159,000 reviews overdue for existing service users. 19,000 who had been assessed were waiting to access support.
- Prevention was noted as an area for more work and investment, with 73% of DAS highlighting prevention as a means for delivering savings down the line.
- In order to meet existing and future demand ADASS was called on the Government to; publish plans for funding reform, provide sustainable funding and implement a long term plan for adult social care.

David thanked Stephen for his presentation, and moved on to discuss LGA policy and activity on adult social care matters:

- The Government's social care reform proposals were due to be announced in coming months. Combined with lobbying for a multi-year settlement in the Spending Review, the social care agenda was expected to be busy.
- The LGA was calling for funding gaps and COVID-19 expenses to be fully met. Also working across multiple channels to deliver system reform that:
  - o addresses unmet and under-met need
  - o tackles workforce challenges by developing a new deal for the workforce
  - o improves provision, choice and control by focusing on users' needs and experience
  - o improves quality by being clear on the outcomes desired and how performance is coordinated and supported, and the role of sector-led support
  - o secures a more rational, sustainable and transparent funding model
  - o protects people from facing catastrophic costs.
- Engagement with ministers and the Department for Health & Social Care was taking place across a variety of channels. This included regular meetings Ministerial Local Government Engagement Group

chaired by the Minister for Care (Helen Whately MP).

David invited Cllr Anntoinette Bramble (Chair – Children & Young People Board) to discuss issues around children’s social care and LGA activity. Anntoinette noted the following points:

- The LGA’s Child Centered Recovery report was forming the core of lobbying on attempts to deliver secure a cross party, child focused recovery. LGA Vice-President David Simmonds MP led a Westminster Hall debate on developing a cross-Government strategy to improve outcomes for children on 14/7/21.
- The CYP Board and officers were engaging with the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, where the LGA is making calls to improve investment in Family Help and increase support for families. A formal response to the Case for Change report will be published in August 2021.
- The LGA published a joint response with the Association of Directors of Children’s Services to the Government’s consultation on standards for unregulated care settings.
- The Department for Education are assessing a capital programme to support councils to develop or expand children’s homes.
- Work continued on the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and ensuring local authorities cooperated on providing care.
- The publication of the SEND Review was expected in Summer 2021. The LGA continued to push the Government to recognise the challenges experienced by councils, and to ensure sufficient funding is available.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points:

- A question arose on the role of the Social Care Precept in long term funding plans. David noted that the LGA is pushing for an effective long-term solution to social care funding. He added that the Precept was a short-term fix which had been unfair on some areas.
- Members noted increasing levels of demand for SEND support which should be addressed in the ongoing Review. Concerns were also noted on access to specialist and medical services, whilst balancing such against community-based services. Anntoinette responded explaining that the LGA had called for a flexible framework between early intervention and long term support at all stages of development. On accessing specialist services Anntoinette recommended building close links with CCG’s to tap into further resource.
- It was suggested that the High Needs Formula should be updated to meet current service needs. Anntoinette agreed on this point.
- A view was expressed on awarding a fair pay settlement to care staff in line with NHS staff given their work during the COVID pandemic. Stephen explained that any pay award must be sustainable in the

long term, but that councils should be more public in thanking staff. He added that, work was need to promote social care as a career option with good pay and progression outlooks. Anntoinette echoed these points for children's social care staff.

- Concerns were expressed with uptake levels of Early Intervention, with many families refusing support. Anntoinette responded that further work was needed and encouraged authorities to partner with local partners and charities to build trust.
- A concern was noted on the Health & Care Bill and the potential for greater medicalisation of social care services. David explained he believed the Bill gave welcome flexibility and scope for local leadership. Cooperation with the NHS would be vital to deliver services effectively.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their time.

#### **Decision**

The members of Councillor's Forum noted the discussion and points raised.

### **3 Chairman's Update**

The Chairman presented the update, noting it summarised his activity since the previous meeting which included:

- Lobbying ahead of the second reading of the Health & Care Bill.
- The Planning Bill had been delayed until Autumn 2021.
- Working to encourage take-up of National Transfer Scheme. Where the DfE and Home Office had largely met local government's calls, it was important receiving authorities received assistance.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points:

- Members emphasised the importance of more flexible working arrangements for local councils and their committees. The disruption being caused by self-isolation was impacting the decision-making process. The Chairman explained that the LGA has consistently pushed for more hybrid and virtual meeting options to be extended to local authorities.

#### **Decision**

The members of the Councillor's Forum noted the report.

### **4 LGA Board Chair Reports**

The Chairman invited the following Board Chair's to discuss their written reports:

#### **Children & Young People Board – Cllr Anntoinette Bramble (Chair)**

In the update, Anntoinette noted the following points:

- The most recent Board meeting, members heard from the following speakers:
  - o Hackney Borough Council on its diverse curriculum and discussing the contribution of black people in British history.
  - o Dame Rachel De Souza (Children's Commissioner for England) on the Big Ask survey conducted on school age children in England.
- Noted that a number of sessions had been held at LGA Annual Conference.
- The LGA launched "A whole household approach to young people's mental health" which provides advice and resources to councillor's around improving young people's mental health.
- A joint meeting of LGA lead members from the CYP and CWB Boards was held with Andrea Leadsom MP to discuss the Best Start for Life review.
- Also heard from the Children's Commissioner and the Big Ask work currently underway.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points:

- Concerns were raised at the engagement rates with the National Transfer Scheme. It was felt that other local authorities needed to engage with the programme and take pressure of receiving authorities to provide suitable accommodation for UAS children.

### **Community Wellbeing Board – Cllr David Fothergill (Chairman)**

In the update, David noted the following points:

- Noted thanks to Ian Hudspeth as his predecessor as Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board.
- The Board conducted a hybrid meeting on 15/7/21.
- The Board continued to work on the Health & Social Care Bill, with a focus on giving greater local leadership and improving wellbeing nationwide.
- Drew attention to a number of sessions the Board had conducted at LGA Annual Conference, particularly the plenary session with Professor Chris Whitty (Chief Medical Adviser).
- Additional work was ongoing on the Autism Strategy, Suicide Prevention and Drugs Misuse.

In the subsequent discussion members made the following points:

- It was suggested that a discussion be undertaken on the potential impact of the NHS Pay increase being drawn from existing funds and impact on local authority linked services.

### **Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board – Cllr David**

### **Renard (Chairman)**

In the update, David noted the following points:

- The publication of the Planning Bill was expected in Autumn 2021. The MGLCG consultation received some 44,000 submission. Cllr Adele Morris led a session discussing the topic of reform in detail.
- The Board held a special meeting to discuss the Government's waste management proposals. Responses were submitted to a range of consultation papers.
- Work was taking place across the LGA on the role of local government at COP26. Several session proposals had been submitted for inclusion in the Government controlled zone.
- The Future Foundations campaign and online hub had been launched to highlight positive stories and good practice on council housing. The hub provides content for lobbying and housing campaigns.
- The LGA planned to publish a paper outlining the ambitions and role of local government in delivering further EV charging capacity.

In the subsequent discussion members raised the following points:

- Members questioned whether the role of hydrogen fuel cells in transport had been considered alongside EV charging. David responded that hydrogen had been raised in discussions with the Government and he personally believed it should be higher on the agenda. He also noted there were some concerns with industry capacity and investment.
- It was also suggested that more consideration should be given to the use of Geothermal energy production.

### **People & Places Board – Cllr Morris Bright (Vice-Chairman)**

In the update, Morris noted the following points:

- Devolution had been a recent priority with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government stating devolution is a priority moving forward. The LGA supported APPG on Devolution published a paper on *Levelling Up Devo*.
- Research had been commissioned into the strengthening recovery and renewal in coastal areas.
- The LGA was due to publish research on strengthening the COVID recovery and resilience in rural areas in July 2021.
- Lobbying continued on the Government's Adult Education Budget funding rule change and the impact on councils' adult and community learning provision.
- 30 bids were submitted for Freeport status. The LGA was lobbying Government on proposals to ensure areas with unsuccessful bids were not left behind economically relative to successful bidders.

### **Decision**

The members of the Councillor's Forum noted the written reports and verbal updates.

- a) Children and Young People Board - Cllr Antoinette Bramble
- b) City Regions Board - Cllr Sir Richard Leese CBE
- c) Community Wellbeing Board - Cllr David Fothergill
- d) Culture, Tourism and Sport Board - Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
- e) Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board - Cllr David Renard
- f) Improvement and Innovation Board - Cllr Peter Fleming OBE
- g) People and Places Board - Cllr Kevin Bentley
- h) Resources Board - Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE
- i) Safer and Stronger Communities Board - Cllr Nesil Caliskan

## **5 Digest of the last meeting held on 10th June 2021**

### **Decision**

The digest of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 was accepted as accurate.

### **Appendix A -Attendance**

| Position/Role   | Councillor             | Authority                       |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chairman        | Cllr James Jamieson    | Central Bedfordshire Council    |
| Vice-Chairman   | Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE | Warwickshire County Council     |
|                 | Cllr Marianne Overton  | North Kesteven District Council |
|                 | MBE<br>Cllr Joe Harris |                                 |
| Deputy-chairman |                        |                                 |
| Members         | Cllr Robert Alden      | Birmingham City Council         |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Cllr John Fuller OBE           | South Norfolk District Council         |
| Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE        | Bexley Council                         |
| Cllr Paul Bettison OBE         | Bracknell Forest Borough Council       |
| Cllr Morris Bright MBE         | Hertsmere Borough Council              |
| Cllr Abi Brown                 | Stoke-on-Trent City Council            |
| Cllr Janet Clowes              | Cheshire East Council                  |
| Cllr Peter Fleming OBE         | Sevenoaks District Council             |
| Cllr Peter Golds CBE           | Tower Hamlets Council                  |
| Cllr Teresa Heritage           | Hertfordshire County Council           |
| Cllr Colin Noble               | Suffolk County Council                 |
| Cllr William Nunn              | Breckland Council                      |
| Cllr Tim Oliver                | Surrey County Council                  |
| Cllr Roger Phillips            | Herefordshire Council                  |
| Cllr David Renard              | Swindon Borough Council                |
| Cllr Linda Taylor              | Cornwall Council                       |
| Cllr Nick Forbes CBE           | Newcastle upon Tyne City Council       |
| Cllr Nesil Caliskan            | Enfield Council                        |
| Cllr Anntoinette Bramble       | Hackney London Borough Council         |
| Cllr James Dawson              | Erewash Borough Council                |
| Cllr Tudor Evans OBE           | Plymouth City Council                  |
| Cllr Paulette Hamilton         | Birmingham City Council                |
| Cllr Richard Henry             | Stevenage Borough Council              |
| Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe         | Bradford Metropolitan District Council |
| Cllr Simon Henig CBE           | Durham County Council                  |
| Cllr Helen Holland             | Bristol City Council                   |
| Cllr Anthony Hunt              | Torfaen County Borough Council         |
| Sir Richard Leese CBE          | Manchester City Council                |
| Cllr Dhanisha Patel            | Bridgend County Borough Council        |
| Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE         | Stevenage Borough Council              |
| Cllr Leigh Redman              | Somerset County Council                |
| Cllr Andrew Western            | Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council  |
| Cllr Richard Kemp CBE          | Liverpool City Council                 |
| Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE | Portsmouth City Council                |
| Cllr Rosemarie Harris          | Powys County Council                   |
| Cllr Paul Woodhead             | Cannock Chase District Council         |
| Cllr David Fothergill          |  |

Apologies

In Attendance

LGA Officers