

Minutes of last Executive Advisory Board meeting

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 7 December 2023

Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest
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Apologies were received from Cllr Marianne Overton, Cllr John Hart, Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Cllr Matthew Hicks, Cllr Satvir Kaur, Cllr David Baines and Cllr Michael Payne.

Cllr Sue Baxter attended as a substitute for Cllr Marianne Overton.

2	Minutes of the previous meeting
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The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3	LGA Lobbying Headlines
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Acting Chief Executive, Sarah Pickup to introduce the LGA Lobbying Headlines report. In particular she explained that as a follow up from the Autumn Statement the LGA had sent out a temperature check to all Councils and the answers to this had been used in recent media activity. This work had also been picked up by the LUHC Select Committee and the LGA had written to the Chair regarding issues arising for Councils. This had proven impactful and effective work which key members were all participating in. Further to this Sarah explained one of the next work strands is a push on the living wage initially through use of social media.

Sally Burlington, Director of Policy (People) & Deputy Chief Executive, shared details of the LGA work on Asylum and the long-standing request for the Home Office to take a more joined up approach with Local Government.

Sally emphasised that there had recently been more political engagement with Ministers meeting with the LGA Chair and other members to discuss these issues. This had led to some positive changes such as reassurance from the Home Office that no one would be made homeless over the Christmas week as a result of being made to leave their accommodation when their asylum agreement ends. Some Afghan families were still in hotels and more arrivals were expected so there was still a great deal of work still to be done. Sally explained that in the New Year asylum regional plans will come to an end and future arrangements of asylum dispersal needs to be explored.

In the discussion that followed, Members made the following points:

- Regarding Councils' concerns about individuals being homeless after they are moved from asylum accommodation, Cllr Kevin Bentley reassured Members that following negotiations Government has confirmed they will now have a few days before having to leave their asylum accommodation.
- A view was expressed that Asylum seekers could be given the right to work, which could have an impact on labour shortages. In response the Chair explained that the LGA does not have an agreed line on that matter.
- Views were also expressed that we could explore what more can be done to ensure warm housing, in particular in the private rented sector. The Net Zero Local Forum was highlighted as a body we could raise this through.

Decision

Executive Advisory Board noted the report.

4 King's Speech 2023

Colm Howard-Lloyd, Head of Public Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement, introduced the paper on the November 2023 King's Speech, seeking approval on which Bills the LGA should prioritise for the purpose of its lobbying, based on the business plan and advocacy priorities. Colm explained that this was the first King's speech in 72 years and included 21 pieces of legislation. 8 new bills were highlighted as of particular interest to the LGA.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, raised that at the last meeting of the Community Wellbeing Board, members had raised concerns that vaping cafes had opened in some parts of the country. Officers had agreed to explore the legislation in place regarding those cafes.
- In response to a query on issues regarding taxis on the Pedicabs Bill Colm advised Members that this issue was a national one as opposed to only impacting London and that the Government were already exploring amendments.
- A view was expressed that a number of Boards would need to be mindful of the impact of the Automated Vehicles Bill.
- The Chair emphasised that those issues which are cross-Board will be explored properly and that there had been great examples of cross-Board work at the LGA already this year.

Decision

That the Executive Advisory Board discussed and agreed the recommended prioritisation of the LGA's legislative lobbying for the next parliamentary session.

5 2023 Autumn Statement

Cllr Pete Marland, Chair of the Economy & Resources Board, introduced the report

providing a summary of the work by the LGA leading up to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22 November. It also sets out the main outcomes from the Statement that are relevant to local government. He emphasised that unfortunately when the Autumn Statement was announced Councils were not mentioned in the announcement at all and only five times in the documentation, of which two of those mentions were in reference to devolution. The Government had said they would raise Local Housing Allowance rates in Great Britain to the 30th percentile of local market rents in April 2024. Despite this rise, the intention was that it would then be frozen again. The Economy & Resources Board had discussed lobbying on this to see it uplifted in future years. Cllr Marland explained that the position of the Housing Support Fund was unclear and that the LGA would like to see it continue.

In the conversation that followed, the following points were made:

- Views were expressed that the LGA had done good work in getting the impact of the Autumn Statement front and centre as well as making the pressures on Councils very clear to the public and media.
- Members asked if there is more we can do to emphasise the importance of non-statutory services which suffer significantly due to financial pressures on Councils.
- Members raised concerns that temporary accommodation for the homeless remains an issue across the county.
- Cllr Pete Marland emphasised that work now continues into next year building towards the spring budget.
- The Chair explained that he had never seen the local government sector so pressured on finances. Further to this he raised the LGA must do all it can as a cross party organisation to ensure the Treasury understands the severe impact of these pressures.
- The Chair emphasised that as it stands even well led and well managed Councils will face severe financial situations in the very near future.
- The Chair and members expressed their thanks to the Economy & Resources Board and LGA staff for all their work on the Autumn Statement.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board:

- Noted the outcomes of the Autumn Statement; and
- Considered and endorsed the future LGA activity in the run up to the 2024/25 local government finance settlement and the 2024 Spring Budget.

6 Any Other Business

Tom Chapman, Senior Adviser to the Chair, asked Members to encourage their Councils to complete the surveys on workforce capacity and agency staffing which had previously been sent to them. This would enable the LGA to analyse the data and respond fully to the DLUHC Key Performance Indicator on this.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Senior-Vice Chairman in the Chair	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chair Deputy-chairman	Cllr Joe Harris Cllr Bev Craig Cllr Michael Payne Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Cotswold District Council Manchester City Council Gedling Borough Council Plymouth City Council
Members	Cllr Darren Rodwell Cllr Peter Marland Cllr David Fothergill Cllr Morris Bright MBE Cllr Martin Tett Cllr Heather Kidd MBE Cllr Andrew Cooper Cllr Jason Smithers Cllr Tim Oliver	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council Milton Keynes Council Somerset Council Hertsmere Borough Council Buckinghamshire Council Shropshire Council Kirklees Metropolitan Council East Midlands Councils County Councils Network
Apologies	Cllr Shaun Davies Cllr Nesil Caliskan Cllr Georgia Gould Cllr Louise Gittins Cllr Satvir Kaur Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE Cllr Abi Brown OBE Cllr Bridget Smith Cllr Marianne Overton MBE Cllr Tony Saffell Cllr Robert Stewart Cllr David Baines Sir Stephen Houghton CBE Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Telford and Wrekin Council Enfield Council Camden Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Southampton City Council Warwickshire County Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council South Cambridgeshire District Council North Kesteven District Council North West Leicestershire District Council WLGA North West Regional Leaders' Board SIGOMA District Councils Network
In Attendance	Joanna Killian Cllr William Nunn	Surrey County Council
LGA Officers	Sarah Pickup Claire Holloway Sally Burlington Sonika Sidhu David Pealing Alexander Saul	Acting Chief Executive Head of Corporate Services Director of Policy Assistant Director of Policy Member Services Manager Assistant Member Services Manager