

## **Resources Portfolio – report from Cllr Claire Kober (Chair)**

### **Portfolio Meeting**

1. On 21 April, Resources colleagues and I met to share experiences and learning from the Portfolio pilot model thus far. Our feedback, along with the Member Task Group's recommendation, will be submitted to the 8 June Leadership Board for their decision. Any changes will come into effect from the new political meeting cycle on 1 September 2016.

### **2016 Budget**

2. The LGA provided an on-the-day briefing on the announcements made by the Chancellor as part of his 2016 Budget which can be read [here](#). It contained important announcements about the future of business rates, including a permanent doubling and expansion of small business rate relief and consideration of moving to more frequent revaluations.
3. It was also announced that London, the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester would pilot increased business rates retention. The exact detail of this announcement is yet to be agreed.

### **Local government retention of business rates**

4. Together with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) we have set up a number of technical working groups and an officer-level steering group to advise on various aspects of business rates reform. All papers and minutes of the meeting can be found in the LGA's dedicated business rates hub [here](#).
5. I also chaired the inaugural meeting of the LGA political task and finish group on local government retention of business rates, created to oversee the LGA's own work on business rates and comprised of representatives of various LGA Boards and Portfolios. It is intended that this group will continue to meet on a monthly basis.
6. Officers have started a programme of regional visits to ensure that the voice of all of local government is heard during the design of local government retention of business rates.

### **Strategic finance for infrastructure**

7. Members of the Portfolio had a briefing from the Chairman and the Chief Operating Officer of the Municipal Bonds Agency on overall approaches to council borrowing and the progress being made by the Agency towards issuing its first bond and the support required from the sector to do so. These themes will be explored at a conference being organised jointly by the LGA and the Agency on 24 May.

### **Pay agreements**

8. A two-year [agreement](#) has been reached on pay for Local Government Services. Two year deals have also been concluded for chief executives, chief officers and craft workers.

### **Hire me my way**

9. The LGA and other partners including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission are backing a national campaign called [Hire Me My Way](#) which launched on the 24 May 2016. The Campaign will give a voice to the millions of candidates who want

to be able to work flexibly. This will give fairer opportunities to part-time and flexible workers and also help councils to recruit and retain the talent they need to run services now and in the future.

**Civitas roundtable discussions on welfare and employment**

10. Cllr Sue Murphy CBE represented the LGA at two roundtable discussions hosted by Civitas and chaired by Frank Field MP. The discussions will contribute to a Civitas report on how welfare reforms can best support the unemployed.
11. The first session on 21 March focused on 'securing higher wages through in work progression'. In-work progression will be a key component of Universal Credit once it is rolled out, but the Department for Work and Pensions are still exploring how this support might be delivered.
12. The second session on 18 April focused on 'guaranteeing the prospect of work for all'. Cllr Murphy used both sessions as an opportunity to set out the LGA's lines on the crucial role of local government in providing better integrated local support for disadvantaged jobseekers.
13. She drew particularly on the LGA's recent submissions to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on: [The future of Job Centre Plus](#) and [The disability employment gap](#).

**Contact Officer:** Nicola Morton / Sarah Messenger / Rose Doran  
**Position:** Heads of Programmes / Senior Advisor  
**Phone no:** 020 664 3109 / 020 7664 7342 / 020 7664 3073  
**E-mail:** [Nicola.Morton@local.gov.uk](mailto:Nicola.Morton@local.gov.uk) / [Sarah.Messenger@local.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Messenger@local.gov.uk) / [Rose.Doran@local.gov.uk](mailto:Rose.Doran@local.gov.uk)