

## **Resources Board Priorities and Work Programme**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and agreement.

### **Summary**

This report outlines proposals for the Board's priorities and key areas of work, set against the available resources.

### **Recommendations**

That the Board:

- i. agree its priorities and work programme for the 2016/17 meeting cycle;
- ii. notes its Member Champions for 2016/17.

### **Action**

Officers to progress the Board's agreed priorities and projects in line with available resources.

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## Resources Board Priorities and Work Programme

### Background

1. Local Government Association's (LGA) Boards engage with and develop a thorough understanding of councils' priorities in relation to their particular programme area. They also help shape our business plan and, through extensive engagement with councils, oversee programmes of work that deliver the strategic priorities set by the LGA Executive.
2. The LGA's Resources Board shapes and develops the Association's policies and programmes in line with the LGA priorities in relation to: Local Government Finance; Strategic Finance; Welfare Reform; and Workforce issues.
3. At this first meeting of the Resources Board, members are asked to consider the policy priorities for the work programme for the coming year. In making these decisions, members are asked to consider two issues:
  - 3.1 That the LGA Leadership Board will be meeting on 14 September to discuss the LGA's priorities and work programme in relation to EU exit. It is likely that individual boards will be asked to lead on aspects of work that fall within their terms of reference.
  - 3.2 Specific policy priorities based on the remit of this Board.

### Board Work Programme and Resources

4. This report sets out a suggested work programme for the Board that will help deliver the LGA's Business Plan priorities. Members are asked to consider the following priorities and projects listed in the below table as the Board's focus for the coming year.

<b>Work Stream: Workforce</b> <b>This work stream is organised into three strands: pay and negotiations support; pension policy and strategic workforce issues</b>	
Pay and negotiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support councils in obtaining value for money in their pay bill by negotiating fair and affordable pay agreements</li> <li>• Begin the work of developing and agreeing a new pay structure for Local Government Services taking account of the National Living Wage</li> <li>• Continue to support negotiations for Education, Fire and Police services</li> <li>• Continue to coordinate responses to consultation on changes to employment law and regulations with a growing emphasis on the potential consequences of Brexit</li> </ul>
Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combining the £200bn assets of the 89 pension funds in England</li> </ul>

	<p>and Wales into 7 or 8 pools and work on legislation for Secretary of State to intervene in investment matters. Valuations will see employer cost increases beyond current average 25% of payroll.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also focused on potential for Freedom and Choice extension into LGPS and possible £1bn bill for increases to Guaranteed Minimum Pensions</li> </ul>
Workforce Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advise and assist councils in modernising their approaches to organisational design, pay and rewards and other workforce development issues</li> <li>• Focus on workforce issues arising from public service reform such as integration and devolution</li> <li>• Continue to provide support to councils to address skills gaps and skill shortages issues, focusing on apprenticeship take up/standards and skills shortages in social work and town planning for example</li> <li>• Focus on support for councils needing to improve their HR services</li> <li>• Review and enhance our chargeable support offer</li> </ul>

**Work Stream: Local Government Finance**

Local Government Finance	<p><b>Business Rates Retention</b> – a long term work programme looking at issues such as responsibilities to be transferred to be funded through business rates, designing the retention system, and the needs review to form the needs baseline that will underpin the system. This work is also being considered by the Business Rates Task and Finish Group, Leadership Board and Executive. This is the main priority for the work of the Local Government Finance Team.</p> <p><b>Other Business Rates Issues</b> – focussing, in the most part on, changes to the appeals system including: Check, Challenge and Appeal; digitalisation of valuation; and other issues such as flexibility around reliefs. Given the impact of these changes on local authority income this work is a priority.</p> <p><b>Local Government Finance Settlements</b> – analysis of the annual local government finance settlement, on the day briefing, responding to the consultation/s, parliamentary work and the annual finance conference.</p> <p><b>Local Government Finance Contributions to set pieces:</b> Spending Reviews, contribution to Autumn Statement and Budget submissions.</p> <p><b>Capital Financing</b> - To influence thinking and formulate policy improvements to suggest to Government in the area of financing capital and infrastructure, and to contribute to national reviews of capital finance, including the forthcoming PAC hearing on the sustainability of local government capital finance</p>
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**Work Stream: Responding to issues arising from the referendum decision to leave the EU**

	Securing the current quantum of £5.3bn funding to English local areas up to 2020.
	Resource Board contribution to review of regulations and technical issues and identification of priorities that we need on the table in the Brexit talks

	Post-Brexit domestic regional aid, i.e. securing an equivalent of funding to English local areas beyond 2020.
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<b>Work Stream: Welfare Reform &amp; Life Chances</b>	
	Research into the local impacts of continued welfare reform and Universal Credit roll-out (due to report Autumn 2016)
	Making the case for adequate and appropriate funding for the local safety net
	Homelessness prevention and housing affordability (in partnership with EEHT Board). Developing a programme of lobbying and improvement work in response to the externally commissioned report.
	Ongoing work on support for the most disadvantaged jobseekers (in partnership with Cities and P&P Boards). In particular devolution of funding to support the most disadvantaged jobseekers.
	Resourcing early intervention and support for families with (young) children (in partnership with CYP and CWB Boards)
	Intergenerational fairness (monitoring policy developments in relation to welfare and pensions)

### **Board Member Champions for the Board's work**

5. Last year, the Board trialled operating a system of Member Champion roles. Board member champions take responsibility for a specified subject area or programme and act as the spokesperson, with the assistance of officer support. Whilst this approach was not suited to all aspects of the Board's work, feedback suggested it had worked well in certain areas. Lead Members have therefore identified a number of areas which they feel would benefit from greater member involvement.
6. The suggested Board champion roles are set out below, alongside those areas which Lead Members' will be championing. Board Members are invited email [Ciarán.Whitehead@local.gov.uk](mailto:Ciarán.Whitehead@local.gov.uk) to express an interest undertaking any of the remaining roles. Expressions of interests will be determined by Lead Members and in line with the LGA's political proportionality.
  - 6.1 Local Government Finance (x2)
  - 6.2 EU funding
  - 6.3 Welfare Reform
  - 6.4 Skills
  - 6.5 Pensions

### **Financial implications**

7. This programme of work will be delivered with existing resources. Additional supporting projects may be commissioned subject to funds being available from a small directorate / team budget.