

## Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

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**Title:** Councillors' Forum  
**Date:** Thursday 19 January 2017  
**Venue:** 5th Floor Conference Suite, 5th Floor (South side), Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.	
2	<b>The Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government</b>  The Chairman introduced the Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.  Mr Javid discussed Adult Social Care and the challenge facing the public sector in light of the demand on care services. Although recognising that there was more to do in this area, he stressed that taxpayers' money had to be spent carefully. Following concerns that attendance allowance would need to be raised through business rates, he assured the forum that this was no longer being considered. He praised co-operative working, highlighting the efficiency of councils working in partnership with their local health trusts. He assured members that the government would publish the Better Care Fund Framework in order to share best practise.  He discussed the housing shortage and the forthcoming Housing White Paper which would set out long term reforms for building new homes. He stressed that local government would play a new role in the future of housing. On devolution, he acknowledged that different challenges in different areas meant not all areas would benefit from having a mayor. However, areas opting for an elected mayor would have a greater degree of powers. Whilst the government wanted to make a success of existing deals, it was also open to hearing from local authorities who wished to put forward new plans.  He discussed the negotiation strategy for Brexit, highlighting that local government would play a part in this, and informed members that the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union would begin discussions with local leaders on this issue shortly.  Following this, the Chairman opened the floor for questions.	

- Concerns were raised on the funding gap for adult social care. Members asked what contingency plans the government had in the event of the failure of a provider. They were assured that officials were looking carefully at the market and were aware of the pressures - government had not lost sight of the need for reform and were considering a longer term solution.
- There was a discussion on the new homes bonus and the changes to this despite agreement in four year finance deals. It was emphasised that this fund had been accounted for in budgets and that removing it now was damaging. Members asked if the government would provide transitional measures to ease this change. They were advised this decision had been made following a government decision to put more funds into adult social care at a time when new funds were unavailable. The decision had been carried out after a consultation.
- A point was raised on the need to agree correct funding formulas before business rates reform came into effect. Members were assured that changes to the funding formula would be made in tandem with business rates reform.
- The housing shortage was discussed. Members asked if the government was prepared to remove the cap on borrowing on social housing in the housing white paper. Members were assured that the government would consider other ways to help, but would not remove the cap on borrowing as there needed to be oversight of this since it was part of the national debt. There was a further discussion on councils being able to borrow to build other facilities, whilst being restricted when it came to housing. It was acknowledged that these rules were outdated, and it was important to reconsider them in order to ensure they reflected current priorities. In relation to developers, it was recognised that there needed to be a greater diversity of housing providers (more small to medium firms).
- Members asked whether the government would be supporting the work of the prevent agenda. They were assured that the Casey Review would be taken seriously in considering the role councils played in safeguarding across the country.
- It was highlighted that around 50% of school leavers were accruing extensive debts at university, leaving them struggling to buy a home later in life. Members asked what the government was doing to support these young people. They were assured that the government was assisting young people through a range of measures, including through starter home schemes. However, it was emphasised that increasing the overall supply of housing would be a significant solution, as this would address the house price inflation, making homes more affordable.
- Concerns were raised around the future of devolution deals which had not been agreed or which had collapsed. Members were advised that although the government would prioritise existing

deals, it was open to discuss deals in areas where there was consensus to take things forward.

Members thanked the Secretary of State and the discussion was drawn to a close.

**3 Chairman's Update**

Members **noted** the Chairman's Update.

**4 LGA Boards & Portfolio Chair's Reports**

Members **noted** the Board and Portfolio Chairs/Chairmans' Reports.

**5 Digest of the last meeting**

Members **agreed** the notes of the last meeting as an accurate summary of the discussion.

## Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Members	Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
	Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Peter Golds	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Colchester Borough Council
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
	Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
	Cllr Rory Love	Shepway District Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Timothy Swift	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
	Cllr Judith Blake	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
	Cllr Robert Bucke	Tendring District Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE	Bedford Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
	Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Anne Western CBE	Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Sarah Hayward	Camden Council
	Cllr Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council

Cllr Claire Kober OBE  
Cllr Barrie Grunewald  
Cllr Anthony Hunt  
Cllr Alan Rhodes  
Cllr Rishi Shori  
Cllr Amy Cross  
Cllr Chris Townsend  
Cllr Mike Eathorne-  
Gibbons  
Cllr Mike Bell

Haringey Council  
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council  
Torfaen County Borough Council  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council  
Blackpool Council  
Surrey County Council  
Cornwall Council  
North Somerset Council