

Chief Executive's Monthly Report – July 2014

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The LGA business plan 2014/15 centres on three priorities:

- Funding for local government;
- Economic growth, jobs and housing; and
- Public service reform.

The monthly Chief Executive's report sets out the LGA's main achievements against those priorities. It also summarises how we are supporting councils through our core improvement services, and how we are managing our own efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendation

That the Leadership Board notes the Chief Executive's report for July 2014.

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Part 1- Achievements against our three priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- Produced analysis showing that councils in England face a **funding gap of £5.8 billion** between March 2014 and end 2015/16, due to reduced government funding and rising demand on services, in particular for older people. The item was covered the Times and across BBC News and BBC radio 2, 4, 5 Live and LBC.
- Our calls for a five-year commitment to the £3.8 billion **Better Care Fund scheme** aimed at integrating health and social care ran on BBC Online, Telegraph Online, Guardian Online and across LBC's news bulletins.
- Our call for further FA and Premier League **investment in grassroots football** ran on BBC Online and across TalkSPORT news bulletins. Cllr Jonathan McShane of the Community Wellbeing Board, appeared on Sky Sports News.
- The **Municipal Bonds Agency** project board approved the establishment of a company - The Local Capital Finance Company Ltd - which over time can evolve into the Agency. This has enabled us to seek equity funding from councils without incurring excessive regulatory costs. On 13 June Sir Merrick Cockell wrote to member councils inviting them to consider investing in the company, followed by draft documents to allow councils to signal their intent to invest and subsequently commit to buying shares. We have continued to promote the Agency direct to member councils through face to face meetings.

Priority 2 – Economic growth, jobs and housing

- Briefed Peers ahead of the second reading of the **Infrastructure Bill**. Our positions on the various provision of the Bill were quoted extensively by Peers during the second reading, including our opposition to the proposed Land Registry changes.
- Our call on the EU to **ban 'misleading' labels** of so-called 'healthy' food products which are high in fat, sugar and salt was reported in the Independent, Telegraph, I paper, Guardian Online and across LBC bulletins.
- The second meeting of the **LGA's Betting Commission** discussed the recent government announcement on proposed changes to planning use classes for betting shops and player protection measures, and heard a presentation from the Assistant General Secretary of the trade union representing betting shop workers.
- Briefed MPs ahead of a Labour-led debate on the **private rented sector**. Our calls for tougher fines and a more streamlined prosecution system to tackle rogue landlords were covered in the Independent, I paper, Guardian and Sunday People. Cllr Clyde Loakes, Vice-Chair of the Environment and Housing Board was interviewed on LBC and BBC Radio 5 Live.
- On **parking**, our response to Eric Pickles' announcement on a 10-minute grace period was covered in the Sunday Express and Mail Online and our response to claims that drivers were forced to pay a record £350 million in parking tickets last year appeared in the Mail.

- The Fire Brigades Union and the Fire Officers Association are consulting on employers' 1% pay offer, whilst **UNISON** confirmed industrial action on 10 July 2014.
- The **Non-Metropolitan Commission**, chaired by Sir John Peace, undertook a call for evidence which closed on the 27 June 2014 with over 30 submissions from councils and other organisations.

Priority 3 – Public services reform

- Briefed MPs ahead of the final Commons stages of the **Deregulation Bill**. Following our campaigning, the Government agreed to protect use of CCTV cameras outside a school, on a red route or clearway, in bus lanes and in bus stands. Cllr Peter Fleming was interviewed on BBC News, Sky News and the Today programme to discuss our response to the ban on CCTV cameras and "spy cars" to enforce parking restrictions.
- Our concerns over proposed **taxi licensing changes** in the Deregulation Bill, which would reduce councils' ability to vet minicab drivers, were widely quoted by MPs when they discussed the proposals on 23 June.
- Worked with Vice President Baroness Smith to table amendments to the **Serious Crime Bill** to give local authorities who play a role in crime prevention a larger share of criminals' assets. We will also ask for a new clause to criminalise inciting and condoning Female Genital Mutilation.
- Jointly hosted the annual conference on **gangs and serious youth violence** with the Home Office, exploring how multi-agency approaches to tackling gang violence can be improved
- Responded to the Parliamentary Regulatory Reform Committee into **Better Regulation** calling for each Government department to nominate a specific Minister to oversee the deregulatory approach and to ensure that the full impact of proposals is considered.
- The **Schools' Workforce Policy and Employment Law conference** in York and London attracted 190 paying delegates representing 86 of the 153 education authorities in England.
- Influenced the Department for Education's consultation on delegation of **children's social care** to third party providers. Ministers accepted our argument that introducing a profit incentive could undermine public confidence in child protection, and have stipulated that only not-for-profit bodies will be able to take on delegated children's social care functions.
- Called for greater council **control over schools** following the issues raised in Birmingham. Our lines ran on BBC Online and ITV Online and Cllr David Simmonds, Chair of the Children and Young People's Board was interviewed on BBC Breakfast and Radio 4's Today Programme.
- Carolyn Downs wrote to Chief Executives updating on the **transfer of children's public health commissioning** responsibilities for 0-5 year olds to local authorities.
- Published a guide jointly with the Centre for Public Scrutiny designed to help councillors support residents to make a **complaint about a health or social care service**.
- The UK has one of the highest incidence rates of **tuberculosis** in Western Europe. Published guidance with Public Health England to address councillors' and officers' questions.
- **Responded to** HM Treasury's consultation **Freedom and Choice in Pensions** supporting the restriction transfers from the LGPS to defined contribution schemes'.
- Published the **LGA 2013-14 parliamentary report**, sending it to all LGA Vice-Presidents with a

letter from the Chairman and promoting our work through our communications platforms.

- Held four **Vice Presidents' lunches** to update them on our engagement with Parliament, the first 100 days and seek their support influencing the 2015 general election manifestos.
- We have now secured nearly 70 speaking opportunities for LGA members at the **autumn Party Conferences**, including events organised by the British Parking Association, Living Streets, the British Medical Association, L&Q Housing Association and the British Property Federation.
- Launched the LGA's new **LGA Parliamentary Network** at the 2014 Local Government Comms Academy in Manchester.

Part 2 - Sector-led support, improvement and innovation – our core services

- Held the second auction of the **Collective Energy Switching Framework**, with 18,005 registrants and 5 suppliers bidding. 61 councils are involved so far and the Switch has created two market leading tariffs from Ovo and British Gas Dual Fuel Paper tariff. The next auction is will be in October 2014.
- Produced a report for launch at Annual conference showcasing where councils have used **technology and digital tools and approaches** to deliver better targeted and more efficient services. Over 50 examples are highlighted totalling over £41 million direct savings.
- Produced a new publication "Peer inside" designed to encourage members and officers to become peers.
- Ran our first **Leadership Essentials session for Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs** as part of the DH funded Health & Wellbeing improvement programme. The next session in October is already fully booked.
- PAS successfully piloted the **planning quality framework** prior to launch in September. This provides councils with an effective and simple way of being responsible for their own performance and providing transparent data to create local accountability.
- Organised two successful events on the **Our Place Support Programme** in partnership with Locality, attended by around 200 delegates. 120 Areas have now been accepted onto the programme following a review of plans over the last month, a quarter of which are council-led, with principal council involvement in the majority of others.

Part 3 – Our own efficiency and effectiveness

1. Guardian Online ran a comment piece from Chairman Sir Merrick Cockell in response to a piece published on the site on the **LGA's effectiveness**. Sir Merrick said: "As I bow out, my judgment is that both local government and the LGA are more effective and more in touch with those we serve than when I arrived three years ago."

Membership

2. Over the past month, the Chairman has visited: Hampshire County Council, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council, West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames Council.
3. Over the past month, the Chief Executive has visited: Manchester City Council, Liverpool City Regions Chief Executives, South West Councils group in Bristol, the incoming Salford City Council director, North West Chief Executives in Manchester, and the Chief Executive of North East Lincolnshire Council.
4. The following visits to councils by the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors are confirmed in the coming months. A diary of visits for the new Chairman will be prepared after Annual Conference.

2014 Schedule of Visits		
25 July	Luton Borough Council	Michael Lockwood
5 August	West Sussex County Council	Michael Coughlin
8 August	Lincolnshire County Council	Michael Coughlin
5 September	Bristol City Council	Carolyn Downs
9 September	London Borough of Croydon	Carolyn Downs
12 September	7 Worcestershire authorities Chief Execs Meeting	Carolyn Downs
12 September	West Oxfordshire District Council	Carolyn Downs
16 September	Council of the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall Council	Carolyn Downs
18 September	Norfolk Chief Execs Meeting	Carolyn Downs
19 September	Milton Keynes Council	Carolyn Downs
6 November	Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Michael Lockwood