

LGA Special Interest Groups

2014 Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board

SIG NAME, LEAD OFFICER, AUTHORITY AND CONTACT DETAILS:

SIG NAME: County Councils Network

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CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:

[Note: Only LGA member authorities are entitled to SIG membership]

Buckinghamshire CC	Essex CC	Nottinghamshire CC
Cambridgeshire CC	Gloucestershire CC	Oxfordshire CC
Central Bedfordshire C	Hampshire CC	Shropshire C
Cheshire East C	Herefordshire C	Somerset CC
Cheshire West & Chester C	Hertfordshire CC	Staffordshire CC
Cornwall C	Kent CC	Suffolk CC
Cumbria CC	Lancashire CC	Surrey CC
Derbyshire CC	Leicestershire CC	Warwickshire CC
Devon CC	Lincolnshire CC	West Sussex CC
Dorset CC	Norfolk CC	Wiltshire C
Durham CC	North Yorkshire CC	Worcestershire CC
East Riding of Yorkshire C	Northamptonshire CC	
East Sussex CC	Northumberland C	

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

CCN is a network of 37 County Councils and Unitary authorities that serve county areas. CCN is a cross party organisation whose views carry particular weight for a large proportion of the country outside the big conurbations: its 37 member councils, with over 2,700 Councillors, serve 23 million people or 47% of the population, over 44 thousand square miles or 85% of England.

CCN is a member-led organisation, and works on an inclusive and all party basis. CCN Council and Executive Committees include Councillors from each of our member authorities. CCN recognises that member authorities must have the right to respond to their communities in different ways and seeks to make representations to government which can be supported by all member authorities. CCN is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the LGA.

CCN acts as the collective voice of counties and champions the legitimate expectation of the 23 million people who live in counties that they should not expect significantly worse access to quality services and infrastructure than people in metropolitan areas simply because of where they live.

Each Council in CCN membership nominates four elected members to serve on the **CCN Council**, and each member council has a guaranteed place on the **CCN Executive Committee**. Top up places are used to ensure proportionality on both CCN Council and executive Committee.

The CCN Council AGM elects the **CCN Management Committee** which comprises the Chairman and a Vice Chairman from each of the political groups. The members of the CCN Management Committee elected at the AGM September 2013 are:

- **Chairman**
Cllr David Hodge (Surrey County Council)
- **Vice Chairmen**
Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Gloucestershire County Council),
Cllr Dave Wilcox (Derbyshire County Council),
Cllr Jeff Reid (Northumberland Council)

CCN also has eight Spokesmen who have been appointed to lead on specific issues in relation to the CCN work programme.

The work of the network is supported by a small core team based in Local Government House in Westminster.

The Team currently comprises:

Director	Dr Caroline Cunningham
Deputy Director	Simon Edwards
Policy Officer	James Maker
Policy & Communications Officer	Philip Baker
Office Administrator	Lisa Wood

CCN works closely with both Elected Members and Officers of member authorities. Both the SCT and ACCE provide a Lead Adviser to CCN, and ACCE nominates Lead Chief Executives to support the CCN Spokesmen in leading specific areas of the work programme. CCN's work on finance is supported by the SCT Technical Support Team, and the CCN Team also works closely with the ACCE Advisory Group.

KEY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

National Advocacy & Representation

Our network acts as the informed and representative voice for County Councils and Unitary Counties in England. We represent and advocate on behalf our members within the LGA; make direct representations to Whitehall departments; and collaborate closely with national stakeholders. CCN hosts our own Annual Conference and also has a presence at LGA Conference.

Policy Development

Combining our national level expertise and our members' frontline policy experiences, we respond to Government consultations and select committee investigations; produce detailed policy briefings and publications; and host policy seminars and workshops.

Sharing & Promoting Best Practice

Through various platforms, including publications, research reports, and workshops, we identify and share best practice across our network to enable our members, and wider public sector, tackle the economic and social problems faced by local communities.

Research & Innovation

Producing and commissioning sector-based, forward thinking, research on behalf of our members and the wider sector to help set the future direction of local government policy and provide an authoritative source of information for members and public sector practitioners alike.

National Collaboration

The CCN works with a wide network of industry stakeholders. This includes the LGA, DCN and Professional Associations, as well as think-tanks, private and public sector local government partners.

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES OF WORK UNDERTAKEN

CCN works to an overall vision "Counties: Our Future" agreed by CCN Council in September 2013. This focuses on the positive contribution of counties in driving economic growth, transforming public services through innovation and securing positive futures for county communities.

Counties our Future sets out three main Campaign areas:



During the past year much of CCN's work has focussed on the role of Counties in driving economic growth, on Adult Social Care and in particular the implications of the Care Bill for CCN member councils, the Better Care Fund and the need for long term financial sustainability, and on local government finance.

As part of this work CCN has responded to government consultations, produced briefings on key issues for members and County MPs, and has published a number of reports based on original research with our member councils. CCN has placed an increased emphasis on communications during the year and there has been a significant increase in the number of placements in both the trade press and national media.

During the year CCN has supported the establishment of a County All Party Parliamentary Group which is Chaired by Henry Smith MP. CCN provides the secretariat for the APPG which has a broad remit to consider the issues and challenges faced by county areas and communities, the current and future contribution of these areas to the overall national economy and well-being, and barriers and constraints that prevent the full potential of county areas from being achieved and to raise awareness of these matters in Parliament.

The APPG had its inaugural meeting in January 2014, and in February launched an Inquiry into “What Should Ambitious Growth Deals for Counties Look Like?” The report of the Inquiry will be published in June 2014.

Further information about **CCN** and details of our current work can be found on the CCN website: www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk

The CCN twitter account is: @CCNOffice

Further information about the **County APPG** can be found on the dedicated web page: <http://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/countyappg/>

The APPG also has its own twitter account: @CountyAPPG.