

Minutes of last Executive Advisory Board meeting

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 9 March 2023

Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest
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The Chairman welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Graeme Miller, Sam Chapman Allen, Rob Stewart, David Baines and Matthew Hicks. There were no declarations of interest.

2	Minutes of the previous meeting
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The minutes of the Executive Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday 26 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

3	LGA Lobbying document
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Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, introduced the report and highlighted the following three main issues: Core Cities, Voter ID and Asylum and Resettlement.

Sally Burlington, Director of Policy (People) provided an update on Asylum and Resettlement, emphasizing the need for regional plans to widen dispersal and working closely with officials.

During the discussion, the following concerns and issues were raised by members:

- The importance of partnership between local and national government regarding asylum issues.
- The need for proper planning for UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children), for associated services to be made available, and the risk this posed for councils.
- There were calls for a renewed relationship with ministers and praise for the Lord Harrington approach.
- Immediate pressures on education and social services were concerning, a summit with government ministers and local government leaders as suggested.
- The need for more work on OFLOG (Office of Local Government)

and a longer-term financial settlement. There were concerns about the threat of closure for leisure centres and swimming pools due to a lack of funding.

- The unacceptable delay in public health funding, with the financial year only three weeks away. The need for a strategy to obtain funding earlier the following year. Mentioned the CQC assessment webinar and encouraged participation.
- Concerns were raised about asylum seekers being housed not only in hotels but also in Airbnb apartments. Mentioned the lack of housing for Afghans and the refusal of schools to increase their intake, causing community cohesion issues.
- Clarification was sought on critical priorities among the 32 priorities mentioned in the report.

Mark proposed better political engagement and gave notice of an upcoming meeting with the Home Office to address demands. It was agreed to prioritize effective campaigns on the top three issues with each department. Sally confirmed that she would request a summit with ministers.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board **agreed** to note the report.

4 Workforce capacity in local government

Sarah Ward, Principal Advisor (Workforce), introduced the report and noted that previous discussions at the Executive Advisory Board, as well as discussions had at all Policy Boards had shaped and informed the paper presented that day. The discussion focused on the widespread capacity challenge in the workforce and identified actions needed in the short, medium, and long term.

During the discussion which followed, members:

- Questioned how to avoid being in the same position in five years' time while also addressing the immediate workforce issue.
- Suggested mirroring the NHS plan with a structural framework and overarching strategy.
- Emphasized the need to identify needs and develop a delivery plan beyond just addressing pay issues.
- highlighted the financial instability and uncertainty of local authorities, which made local government careers less attractive compared to other sectors.
- Queried if the memorandum of understanding on social care workers was being adhered to and suggested closer collaboration with the NHS, which offered better pay and proposed establishing a centre of excellence in partnership with a local college to train people for adult social care and gather good practices from around the country.
- expressed concerns about addressing fundamental structural issues rooted in a lack of funding.
- Pointed out better terms and conditions in the private sector,

which affects the ability to attract and retain employees in local authorities, in particular highlighting the discrepancy in pay between councils and supermarkets.

- Highlighted the need for proper funding and devolution for reliable local governance.
- Mentioned the unspent apprenticeship levy and suggested that the government provide flexibility in its use.
- Discussed the skills agenda and the reliance on agency staff for vulnerable service users and mentioned the need for agility in addressing workforce challenges.
- Proposed a regional perspective be looked at to address the workforce challenges and find solutions.
- Suggested that regional teams could assist in addressing the workforce issue.
- Discussed the concept of shared jobs and joint posts across health or community safety to strengthen partnerships.
- Mentioned challenges in recruitment, particularly in planning roles, and emphasized the importance of sharing good practices among member councils.
- Highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workforce, including the loss of certain professions such as train drivers and HGV drivers.
- Raised concerns about age profiling and the need for updated skills.
- Discussed the need for transformation in services and questioned how services would look in ten years. Suggestion to move away from outdated principles and adapt with technological advancements.
- Pointed out the cost-of-living crisis and emphasized that the sector is undervalued.

In summing up, Sarah welcomed the comments, which reflected the work in the paper. She noted that the point about finances was well made, but it was not just a pay issue. She acknowledged the good work done on how to motivate, retain, and recruit employees and emphasized the importance of being an employer that is flexible to people's needs. She expressed the desire to find good practices and focus on finding innovation. She mentioned that there was much to celebrate, such as the NGDP and returners programs, and that local government had a good story to tell on hybrid working, in which it had been a leader.

Decision

The executive Advisory Board **agreed** to note the report and bring the back at a future meeting.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr James Jamieson OBE	Central Bedfordshire Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Joe Harris	Cotswold District Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton	North Kesteven District Council

Deputy-chairman	MBE	
	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
	Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
	Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Baroness Teresa O'Neill	Bexley Council
	OBE	
	Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset County Council
	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
	Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
	Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City
	Cllr Gerald Vernon-	Portsmouth City Council
	Jackson CBE	
	Cllr Paul Woodhead	Cannock Chase District Council
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	West Midlands
	Cllr John Hart	South West Councils
	Cllr Nicolas Heslop	South East Councils
	Cllr Christopher Poulter	East Midlands Councils
Cllr Shabir Pandor	Yorkshire and Humber Region	
Sir Stephen Houghton	SIGOMA	
CBE		
Cllr Tim Oliver	County Councils Network	
Apologies	Cllr Robert Stewart	WLGA
	Cllr Matthew Hicks	East of England LGA
	Cllr Graeme Miller	North East of England
	Cllr David Baines	North West Regional Leaders' Board
	Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	District Councils Network