

Chief Executive's Monthly Report – January 2015

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 January 2015.

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Part 1- Achievements against our three priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- The Chancellor confirmed in the **Autumn Statement** that local services would not face additional cuts in 2015-16. The Government has therefore listened to **LGA lobbying** and acknowledged the huge contribution councils have already made to balance the country's books and the fragile position in which this has placed many authorities..
- Produced an **On the Day Briefing** in response to the Autumn Statement and the Local Government Finance Settlement, these set out the key announcements impacting on local government.
- The Government committed to giving local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (in collaboration with NHS England) indicative **multi-year budgets** as soon as possible after the next Spending Review, after extensive LGA lobbying.

Priority 2 – Economic growth, jobs and housing

- In the Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced a review of the future structure of **business rates**, which the LGA has been calling for, and gave the Government's assurance that it will be fiscally neutral as far as local government is concerned.
- Successfully lobbied Government to announce **licensing reforms** in the Autumn Statement based on proposals from the LGA's Rewiring Licensing for a single online application process for local businesses to apply for licenses, and is the first step towards much-needed comprehensive licencing reform.
- Warned against the **Careers and Enterprise Company body**, 'another national agency, tasked with the impossible challenge of matching thousands of local schools with two million employers'.
- Briefed Peers ahead of the Second Reading of the **Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill** in the House of Lords.
- Responded to a government **consultation on the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill**. We are concerned that the Government intends to use the powers in the Bill to centralise procurement which we believe to be anti-localist.

Priority 3 – Public services reform

- The Chief Executive, Carolyn Downs, gave evidence to the **Public Accounts Committee** and the **Health Committee** on funding for health and social care and the Better Care Fund.

- Held the annual **Safer Communities Conference** which explored what works in tackling crime and disorder with keynotes speakers from the College of Policing and Early Intervention Foundation.
- Successfully lobbied the Home Office for the **retention of council powers** of entry to licensed premises. This is part of the wider government review of approximately 2,400 powers of entry.
- Secured support from the Association of Chief Police Officers, the College of Social Work and FORWARD, a leading charity working on female genital mutilation (FGM), for the joint bid with Barnardo's to the Department for Education's **Social Care Innovation Fund** to establish a centre of excellence for tackling FGM.
- Engaged nine councils in the People and Places/City Region Boards' **public service transformation research project**, which is developing evidence-based case studies in support of a community budget type approach.
- Helped to ensure that William Sieghart's **Independent Report on Public Libraries** recognised that libraries are a locally-led service with much existing innovation and recommended setting up a local government-led Task Force.
- Continued consultation with DCLG to resolve any further technical issues following the introduction of the new **career average pension scheme**.
- Continued discussion with the Government around the potential safeguards to be put in place to protect both members and taxpayers from potential risks around transfers out of the **LGPS to DC schemes**.

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

- Launched the **Commissioning Academy for elected members** in collaboration with the Cabinet Office, where councillors involved in commissioning services can develop skills and gain a better understanding of the key issues through peer to peer learning.
- Supported 15 culture portfolio holders to lead transformational change at the fourth **LGA/Arts Council England Culture Leadership Essentials Programme**, and 10 sport portfolio holder at a **joint LGA/Sport England learning network event**.
- The **LGA Destinations Data project** holds its final workshop in January and will bring together councils, government and Ofsted to shape the final report, the planning tool, and recommendations for the future use of destinations data.
- Commissioned a publication to showcase the best practice in managing **police and crime panel responsibilities**, including guidance on how to respond to a change in Police and Crime Commissioner mid-term following the high profile resignation in South Yorkshire.

- Worked with **LGAR** and **Fire Services Management Committee Lead Members** to develop a fire specific perceptions survey to give us feedback on our performance and enable us to explore new opportunities to work further with members.
- Introduced the first **Community Leadership e-learning module for councillors**, with over 85 councillors already signed up to the platform.
- Launched the **Digital Experts programme** to help more councils benefit from the technology and digital tools and approaches successfully implemented by other councils.
- In the Autumn Statement the Chancellor recognised the success of the council-led Troubled Families programme. The expansion to new groups of people is an important step towards the LGA's vision for **devolved place-based budgets** that will enable the local joining-up of public services to better meet the needs of people and places.
- Initiated a new project to look at the **efficiency** opportunities arising from **health and social care integration**, seeking productivity and efficiency opportunities arising from integration.
- Commissioned CIPFA to undertake a sector-led project to help provide a clearer picture of **children's' services costs**. We are working with DfE to make the recommended improvements in time for next year's data collection from councils.

Part 3 – Our own efficiency and effectiveness

In the Media

1. 2014 saw the LGA mentioned **33,290** times in national, regional, trade, broadcast and online publications. This includes **1,480** mentions in national newspapers, broadcast and online articles – both of these figures are up **47 per cent** on 2013.
2. @LGANews tweets have been retweeted **2,637** times in 2014, reaching a potential audience of **10.37m** people.
3. The Chair discussed our 100 days campaign with a number of high level cabinet and Shadow Cabinet figures, including; Leader of the Opposition, **Ed Miliband MP**; Shadow Chancellor, **Ed Balls MP**; Chair of the Cabinet Committee for devolved powers, **William Hague MP**; Minister for Government Policy, **Oliver Letwin MP**; and Minister of State for Universities and Science, **Greg Clark MP**.

4. Our media presence included:

	Issues raised
Telegraph, Mail Online, FT Online, BBC Online, Mirror, BBC Breakfast, Good Morning Britain, BBC Radio 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Live	Councils' parking income surplus increased by 19 per cent to £549 million.
BBC Online, Mail Online, Guardian Online	Cllr David Sparks' response to the Government's Autumn Statement
BBC News, Sky News, ITV News	Our reaction to the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
BBC Radio 4, BB Online, Guardian, Times.	Our warning on the impact of budget cuts
Times, BBC Online, Guardian	Our research into £22m cost to Local Authorities of converting schools to academies.
Observer, BBC Online, Telegraph, Times, Independent, Mail, Mirror	Joint letter calling for greater devolution, signed by us and more than 100 council leaders.
Guardian, Financial Times, Radio 4's Today.	Call for an independent Review of Ofsted
ITV Online, Express, Mail Online	Councils preparing for cold weather
Independent on Sunday, BBC Online	Our response to lack of emergency accommodation for under-16s who have ran away.
Mirror, BBC Online	Our response to further £55 billion worth of cuts required by 2020.
Telegraph Online, Mail Online	Our response to nearly 1 in 10 council houses occupied by non-UK residents

Membership

5. The following visits to councils by the Chairman and Chief Executive are confirmed in the coming months.

2014/15 Schedule of Visits		
5 January	Cannock Chase District Council	Cllr David Sparks
8 January	Slough Borough Council	Carolyn Downs
8 January	Wokingham Borough Council	Carolyn Downs
9 January	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Carolyn Downs
13 January	Buckinghamshire County Council	David Sparks
19 January	Newcastle City Council/City of York Council	Carolyn Downs
26 January	Lancashire County Council	Carolyn Downs
28 January	Brentwood and Thurrock Borough Councils	Carolyn Downs
29 January	Derby City Council	David Sparks
6 February	Plymouth City Council	David Sparks
6 February	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Carolyn Downs
10 February	Milton Keynes Council	David Sparks
19 February	North West Chief Executives	Carolyn Downs
19 February	Oldham Council	Carolyn Downs
19 February	Manchester City Council	Carolyn Downs
tbc	Plymouth City Council	David Sparks