

Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date:	Thursday 23 October 2014
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>English Devolution</p> <p>Cllr David Sparks welcomed Professor Colin Copus, Steve Reed MP, Heather Wheeler MP and Lord Purvis of Tweed to Councillors' Forum to discuss English Devolution.</p> <p>Professor Copus explained the format of the discussion and introduced the the devolution issue.</p> <p>Steve Reed MP discussed the fact that England is viewed as the 'last outpost of the British Empire' and remains massively over centralised while Scotland has been offered a form of 'devo max'.</p> <p>'English votes on English laws' is not the solution because it does not push power down far enough. Devolution must make power more accessible and usable because current public opinion shows that those who hold power currently are seen as remote and unaccountable. Power must be drawn closer to the people.</p> <p>Any new settlement should build on the current structure but not be limited to infrastructure. Devolved decision-making on health, education and welfare would mean that 'English votes on English laws' is not an issue. This approach should not stop at town halls. Following a principle of subsidiarity, power should be given to citizens and service providers should be accountable to communities. This model would allow for the shrinking of government departments, with central government doing less but doing it better.</p> <p>This approach can be summarised as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A constitutional principle of subsidiarity.2. Single pot negotiated deals with their own priorities3. Empowerment of citizens and service users <p>Heather Wheeler MP discussed the concept of Total Place as a model for English devolution. Central government and Ministers at the Department for Communities and Local Government understand the importance of communities coming together to make decisions in this way.</p>	

Local Leader's Boards could utilise one budget to cascade down funds on the basis of local priorities. This is an example of trusting the people that people vote for, councillors, to shape services.

Regional government has been rejected but it is important that 'English votes on English laws' form part of the answer to the devolution question. Hopefully, by May 2015, all political parties involved will have agreed on a strategy to achieve this. If this is not the case, the Conservative party will include it in their manifesto for the general election.

Lord Purvis of Tweed observed that within the United Kingdom there has been organic federalism. Following the Smith Commission, there will be some form of a federal United Kingdom. This can be seen from relationships between the nations that have a statutory footing and dispute resolution.

A bottom up approach, where centralised legislation enables decisions to be made locally, requires two sets of core principles. One set of principles surrounds the narrative of what the United Kingdom is, while the other involves both legislative and fiscal devolution.

There is work to be done first, on enabling legislation for true fiscal devolution, before questions need to be answered about voting.

Members discussed:

- Fiscal devolution
- Fiscal relationships between the nations
- Tax powers in areas such as London
- The basket of taxes
- A constitutional convention
- The need for more than political decision making on this issue
- The role of town and parish councils in devolution

2 Chair's Update

Members noted the Chair's report.

3 LGA Boards Chairs' Reports

Members noted the updates from each of the LGA Board Chairs.

4 Digest of the last meeting

The note of the last meeting was agreed.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Sparks OBE	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Gary Porter	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Jim McMahon	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire County Council
	MBE	
Deputy-chairman		
Members	Cllr Daniella Radice	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Robert Bucke	Tendring District Council
	Cllr David Acton	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr Kenneth Taylor OBE	Coventry City Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr David Simmonds	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
	Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr Marco Cereste	Peterborough City Council
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
	Sir William Lawrence Bt	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
	Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge District Council
	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Simon Henig	Durham County Council
	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Ann Lucas OBE	Coventry City Council
	Cllr Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
	Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Ron Round JP	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Sir Stephen Houghton	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	CBE	
	Cllr Barbara Janke	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
	Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
	Cllr Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset County Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	South Lakeland District Council
	Cllr Norman Bradbury	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Chris Townsend	Mole Valley District Council
	Cllr Judith Blake	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Roger Begy OBE	Rutland County Council
	Cllr Glenda Vaughan-Powell	
	Cllr Norman Murphy	
	Cllr John Clarke	

Cllr Katie Hall
Cllr Tony Jackson
Cllr John Northcott
Cllr Colin Organ
Cllr Michael Payne
Cllr Chris Saint
Cllr Ian Stephens

Apologies

Cllr Nicolas Heslop
Cllr Phil Davies
Cllr Vince Maple
Cllr Anthony Hunt
Cllr Sarah Hayward
Cllr Teresa O'Neill
Cllr Geoffrey Theobald
OBE
Cllr Martin Tett
Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE
Cllr Kay Hammond
Cllr David Hodge
Cllr Ravi Govindia
Cllr Melvyn Caplan
Cllr Jonathan Owen
Cllr David Finch
Cllr Colin Noble
Cllr Philippa Roe
Cllr Bryony Rudkin
Cllr Judi Billing
Cllr Caitlin Bisknell
Cllr Clyde Loakes
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock
Mayor Jules Pipe
Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE
Cllr Nick Forbes
Cllr Linda Thomas
Sir Richard Leese CBE
Lord Peter Smith
Cllr Colin Lloyd
Cllr David Phillips
Cllr Sue Woodward
Cllr James Alexander
Cllr Lib Peck
Cllr Nicholas Crofts
Cllr Helen Holland
Cllr Anne Western
Cllr Jeremy Hilton
Cllr Claire Hudson
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE
Cllr Heather Kidd
Cllr Cathy Bakewell MBE
Cllr Deborah Croney
Cllr Mahroof Hussain
MBE
Cllr Claire Kober
Cllr Izzi Seccombe
Cllr David Burbage MBE

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Medway Council
Torfaen County Borough Council
Camden Council
Bexley Council
Brighton & Hove City Council

Buckinghamshire County Council
Suffolk County Council
Surrey County Council
Surrey County Council
Wandsworth London Borough Council
Westminster City Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Essex County Council
Suffolk County Council
Westminster City Council
Suffolk County Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
High Peak Borough Council
Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Lewisham London Borough Council
Hackney London Borough Council
Northumberland Council
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Bolton Council
Manchester City Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Crawley Borough Council
Swansea City and County Council
Staffordshire County Council
City of York Council
Lambeth London Borough Council
Liverpool City Council
Bristol City Council
Derbyshire County Council
Gloucestershire County Council
Mendip District Council
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Shropshire Council
South Somerset District Council
North Dorset District Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Haringey Council
Warwickshire County Council
Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough

Cllr Kevin Bentley
Cllr Nigel Ashton
Cllr Steve Count
Cllr Kenneth Meeson
Cllr Jane Scott OBE
Cllr Elaine Atkinson
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE
Cllr Mike Eathorne-
Gibbons
Cllr Keith House

Colchester Borough Council
North Somerset Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Wiltshire Council
Borough of Poole
Gloucestershire County Council

In Attendance