

Chief Executive's Monthly Report – September 2015

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The LGA business plan for 2015/16 centres on four priorities:

- Funding for local government;
- Devolution;
- Economic growth, jobs and housing and
- Sector-led support, improvement and innovation – our core services

The six-weekly 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 September 2015.

Action

As directed by members.

Contact officer: Sarah Pickup
Position: Deputy Chief Executive
Phone no: 020 7664 3109
Email: sarah.pickup@local.gov.uk

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Part 1 – Achievements against our three priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- Continued campaigning for local government funding throughout the **Summer Budget** process. This involved:
- A **technical local government finance briefing** for MPs and Lords, held before the Budget in the House of Lords;
- Preparing the **on-the-day briefing**;
- Publishing follow-up stories on **social housing rent policy**, the **National Living Wage** and others.
- Secured the **delay to implementation of Phase 2 of the Care Act until 2020**. This follows our lobbying in early July for Phase 2 to be postponed with earmarked funding to be transferred into the mainstream social care system.
- Secured an extension of the **Discretionary Housing Payment fund**, worth £800 million over the next five years.
- Produced and **disseminated local authority-specific Future Funding Outlook models** to aid councils with their medium-term financial planning.
- Prepared submissions to the **Spending Review** on **adult social care** and other corporate funding priorities. They are being finalised at the time of writing.

Priority 2 – Devolution

- Responded to councils' concerns about the implications of the September 4th deadline for bids by securing the Government's confirmation that **devolution negotiations** will be an ongoing process throughout the parliament.
- Successfully pressed for amendments to the **Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill** in the Lords that would help to bring more transparency and consistency to the deals process. The Bill is expected to be introduced in the Commons in the autumn.
- Submitted evidence to the CLG Committee's inquiry on the **Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill**.
- Updated our **online tools** to support councils working on devolution proposals, with substantial changes to the governance map and devolution register – visit our DevoNext Hub here:
http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution//journal_content/56/10180/6945767/ARTICLE
- Welcomed **Andrew Campbell**, Acting Director General, Finance and Corporate Services at the Department for Communities and Local Government, on secondment. Andrew will lead on work offering LGA support to councils as they prepare for devolution deals, helping to bring Whitehall expertise to local negotiations. He will also co-ordinate some of the LGA's strategic digital work.

- Visited groups of councils across England to discuss their proposals for devolution, including the **SW Devolution summit, Gloucestershire, Devon and Somerset, SE Councils, Cumbria, Norwich, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire**, and the **Sheffield City Region**.
- The **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Reform, Decentralisation and Devolution in the UK**, to which the LGA provides the secretariat, launched a far-reaching inquiry on devolution and constitutional reform:
<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11637/Devolution+APPG+-+terms+of+reference+July+2015/9fd6fc24-f4a0-4b1c-9740-fa404a41a2fb>

Priority 3 – Economic growth, jobs and housing

- Supported the launch of Arts Council England's £7.1 million fund to extend **Wi-Fi** to all English public libraries, secured as a result of lobbying by the joint **LGA / Government Leadership for Libraries Taskforce**.
- Responded to the Government's **Five Point Tourism Plan and VisitEngland's consultation on their new growth strategy** by highlighting councils' leadership role and opportunities to drive further growth by devolving growth, skills and infrastructure funding and policy levers.
- Published new case studies about how film and television production shoots can help to boost **local growth**.

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

- Secured a record amount of **Highlighting Political Leadership** bookings this year (nearly 500 bookings, a figure not normally achieved until mid-October) and a record number of leaders will be participating (over 40 to date compared to 20 in previous years).
- Reached 7122 users able to access the **Community Leadership e-learning modules** online. Councillors can register to access the modules individually, through their own council system or through an external 'portal' provider.
- Welcomed 97 trainees into 44 councils this autumn on Cohort 17 of the **ngdp**. Cohort 15 is drawing to a close with over two thirds of the trainees already in permanent work, and Cohort 16 are entering their second year of the programme with excellent feedback from councils.
- Delivered 20 **peer challenges** since 1st April, confirmed a further 42 and have 45 in discussion.) This includes a range of different peer challenges including corporate, finance, fire, children's and adults. In addition, there have been 2 corporate peer challenge follow up visits, and 6 peer development/briefing events have been delivered
- Delivered **change of control/leader support** to 32 authorities as a result of the May local elections along **with bespoke peer mentoring** in a further 19 councils.

- Provided **direct improvement support** to 46 councils, provided **peer challenge follow up support** to 10 councils and undertaken **top team development** work in 8 councils.
- Responded to an Institute of Licensing consultation on the development of **standard licensing conditions**. We have welcomed the initiative to improve the quality of conditions, but have rejected the idea that councillors should be constrained to a short-list of conditions.
- The [first phase report](#) of the LGA backed research **into local vulnerability to gambling related harm** was published in July. The research identifies groups who may be more vulnerable to experiencing gambling related harm.
- Published a best practice [guide](#) on how **council regulatory services** can support local businesses. Building on the LGA's vision for local regulation, **Open for Business**, the document outlines a range of case studies highlighting steps that councils can take to ensure that business facing services are contributing to local economic growth.
- Published '**Ageing: the silver lining**' a report on the opportunities and challenges of an ageing society for local government.
- Published a guide for councils on developing **Dementia friendly communities**.
- Building on the launch at Annual Conference of "Getting Better Together; A Call to Action for HWBS" we are continuing our dialogue with **NHS Clinical Commissioners** on taking forward our joint commitments.
- Developing a joint briefing with **Monitor** and **NHS providers** on successful engagement of providers in **HWBs** to be launched in December.
- Launched a comprehensive report on the current operation of **local safeguarding children boards**, urging government to clarify their responsibilities and ensure that funding burdens do not continue to fall disproportionately on local authorities.
- Launched a new guide to help members understand the impact of an inadequate rating for **children's services**, including advice on planning and delivering improvement and case studies from councils which have experienced intervention.
- Supported 18 sport and physical activity portfolio holders to lead transformational change of leisure services and improve links to health partners at the latest **LGA / Sport England Leadership Essentials Programme**.
- Published new case studies that highlight how the arts can **improve mental and physical wellbeing**, helping to prevent costly health and social care expenditure.

Part 3 – Our own efficiency and effectiveness

1. Since the last report our media presence has included:

	Issues raised
The Financial Times	LGA called for an end to the ring-fenced budget that protects the NHS and for the money to be put into adult social care
Guardian Online	Future Funding Outlook analysis
Guardian Online, BBC Radio 4's Today programme, FT	LGA's calls for the second phase of the Care Act, to be postponed.
BBC Online, Independent, LBC, i Paper, FT, Daily Mail, Telegraph	LGA's initial response to the National Living Wage
Guardian	A Shared Commitment: Local Government and the Spending Review
BBC Online	LGA's recent joint report with IPPR, which criticised apprenticeships for failing to tackle youth unemployment.
Guardian Online	LG Inform
Guardian Online	Greater Manchester's devolution deal and further expected deals with Liverpool, Leeds and Cornwall
BBC Newsnight, BBC Radio 5 Live	Potential impact on local government of 25% and 40% cuts as part of the Spending Review outlined by Chancellor George Osborne.

Membership

2. As of 1 April 2015, all English councils are members of the LGA, with the exception of:
 - 2.1. London Borough of Bromley
 - 2.2. Sheffield City Council
 - 2.3. Wandsworth Council

3. The 9 authorities who have given notice to leave LGA membership on 31st March 2016 are:
 - 3.1. West Sussex County Council
 - 3.2. Waverley Borough Council
 - 3.3. East Staffordshire Borough Council
 - 3.4. Stockton on Tees Borough Council
 - 3.5. Barnet Council
 - 3.6. Preston City Council
 - 3.7. London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
 - 3.8. North Lincolnshire Council
 - 3.9. Bristol City Council