**Chairman’s Update – January 2014**

**Local Government Association (LGA) business**

1. At January’s **Leadership Board**, business focused on the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS). The board endorsed the response to the LGFS agreed by Finance Panel office holders. Members also reviewed the **draft business plan and budget for 2014-15**. Progress is on-going and in line with member’s decisions. The quarterly report on **communications activity** was well received with the main results noting that mentions in national media were up 101 per cent year-on-year, with **71 per cent of the LGA’s coverage being positive**.
2. At our Special Meeting of the **General Assembly**, members voted overwhelming to **approve the revised constitution**. Updates to the Councillor Forum in the coming months will no doubt make reference to the approved new City Regions board and People & Places board.
3. The **LGA Executive** agenda included the Local Government Finance Settlement report and a summary of the **LGA’s Equalities Work**. Updates were also received on Health and Social Care Transformation and the Local Government Pensions Committee.

**Ministerial/Parliamentary business**

1. Over the course of the festive period and into January, I met with a number of MPs including Andrea Leadsom, Andy Sawford and Nick Raynsford. Ministerial activity included:
	1. **Rt Hon David Cameron MP,** Prime Minister, to discuss fracking, Rewiring Public Services and Local Government cuts.
	2. **Brandon Lewis MP**, Parliamentary under Secretary at DCLG, to discuss the Local Government Finance Settlement.
	3. **Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP and Sir Bob Kerslake**, Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary of DCLG to discuss Armed Forces Reserves.
	4. **Baroness Stowell**, Parliamentary under Secretary at DCLG to discuss a joint piece of work on Tackling Fraud.
	5. **Sajid Javid MP**, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, to discuss the Autumn Statement and our municipal bonds agency.
2. I also gave evidence to the Public Affairs Select Committee on Citizens and Public Services Committee.

**Meetings with other organisations and individuals**

1. I took a number of meetings with outside organisations including:
	1. **David Gregson**, Chairman of the **Lawn Tennis Association** to discuss physical activity.
	2. Lady Cobham and James Berresford, Chairwoman and Chief Executive of **Visit England** for a general update on a number of **cultural** and economic areas.
	3. Alongside Carolyn Downs, I met with **Sir Michael Lyons** as he undertakes a piece of work for the Lyons Housing Review.
	4. Following my attendance at the Health Secretary’s **Dementia Movement** roundtable in December, Interim Chief Executive Michael Coughlin and I met with **Jeremy Hughes, Chief Executive of the Alzheimer’s Society** to discuss the aims of the Dementia Movement in 2014-15.
	5. **Lars Anderson** and **former State Secretary of Sweden, Sören Hӓggroth** to discuss the **municipal bonds agency** with a more general discussion about the Local Government sector ahead of the release of their book on the same subject.
2. My **media contact** this month has focused on **fracking** with contributions to the **Today** programme, **BBC News, Sky News** and pre-records for the One and Ten O’Clock news slots.
3. Speaking engagements included attendance at a **DGroup** luncheon, **Healthwatch England Committee** and Cumberland Lodge’s **Social Determinants of Health conference** alongside Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England and Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer.

**Meetings with councillors and member councils**

1. In January, I attended several diary commitments outside of London for local authority meetings, regional visits and **Rewiring Public Services** Roadshows. Although not an exhaustive list, my travels have taken me to Birmingham, Kent, Windsor and Leeds.