

Chief Executive's Monthly Report – December 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
- 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. In part two, the report summarises how we are managing our own efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendation

That the Leadership Board notes the Chief Executive's report for December 2015.

Action

As directed by members.

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Part 1 – Achievements against our four priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- 1.1. In preparation for the **Spending Review**, launched *Best Use of Public Money – A Shared Commitment*, arguing the case for place-based finance as a way to manage reductions in public spending sustainably and reinvigorate investment in prevention.
- 1.2. Published the on-the-day briefing on the **Spending Review** setting out the implications for councils.
- 1.3. Launched the latest iteration of the popular '**Spidergram**' analysis showing councils how they compare with others on a range of financial indicators. The data and format were released on **LGIinform**, enabling councils to construct their own comparator groups.
- 1.4. Responded to the government's consultation on the proposed new formula for distributing **public health grant**.
- 1.5. Responded to a DCLG consultation on **Improving Efficiency in Council Tax Collection** proposing to extend the data sharing powers with HMRC, including:
 - welcoming this at a time when councils are under financial pressure and wish to collect every penny due to them in council tax
 - raising the issue of the Valuation Office Agency sharing council tax data with councils

Priority 2 – Devolution

- 2.1. Updated the **DevoHub** to include:
 - an overview of the new deals agreed with the Sheffield City Region, North East Combined Authority, Tees Valley, West Midlands Combined Authority and Liverpool City Region (<http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution-deals>)
 - a new infographic on what businesses could gain from devolution: (http://issuu.com/lgapublications/docs/devo_skills_infographic?e=16807299/30676629)
 - a new video that explains in 60 seconds what combined authorities are (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtzL12d2eGk&feature=player_embedded)
- 2.2. Assisted a number of areas in the country to prepare for their **challenge sessions** with Government ministers.
- 2.3. Delivered a successful and well-attended national conference on **communicating about devolution** in Birmingham on October 21st.
- 2.4. Organised two events for elected members to explore **place-based leadership in the context of devolution** as part of the LGA's Leading Edge and Leaders' Programme.

Priority 3 – Economic growth, jobs and housing

- 3.1. Briefed national tourism organisations on the potential for 100% **retention of business rates** to support councils and partners to further boost the visitor economy.
- 3.2. Lobbied Government on the planned introduction of an **exit payment cap for public sector employers** to take into account concerns raised by local authorities.
- 3.3. Hosted a workshop for chief executives and senior officers to discuss a sustainable future for **trading standards services**.
- 3.4. Launched “a home is much more than a house” on **integrated approaches for housing, health and the care needs of vulnerable adults**
<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/L15-435+A+home+is+much+more+than+a+house/df3048c6-63b8-4419-8dcb-afee2a275f69>
- 3.5. Actively worked to influence the progression of the **housing and planning bill** through parliament, influencing debate through briefings and in evidence sessions and gaining press coverage around our position.

Priority 4 - Sector-led support, improvement and innovation – our core services

- 4.1. In 2015/16, up to and including the second quarter, worked with: 38 councils on **change of control/leader support**, 27 councils on **bespoke mentoring support**, 16 councils on **top team development**, 17 councils with **follow up to peer challenges**, 101 councils on **direct improvement support** and 36 councils on **communications improvement support**.
- 4.2. Delivered, confirmed, or in discussion on **100 peer challenges**, including corporate, finance, fire, children and adults challenge. There were also three corporate peer challenge follow up visits and we delivered eight peer development/briefing events.
- 4.3. Ran/set up **Leadership Essentials** events on **children’s services** (28–29 Oct and 7–8 Nov), **adult social care** (18–19 Nov), **cultural services** (3–4 Nov, and 2–3 Dec), **planning** (14–15 Nov and 2–3 Dec), **health and wellbeing boards** (18–19 Nov) and **Sport** (in partnership with Sport England).
- 4.4. Published a report for subscribing authorities pulling together data from the **Local Government Workforce and Earnings surveys**, displaying information on range of indicators.
- 4.5. Began the recruitment process for Cohort 18 of the **National Graduate Development Programme** – attracting top talent from the graduate market to councils.
- 4.6. Launched a new **Councillor Guide on Cultural Commissioning** that shares examples of how cultural services are helping councils to achieve public health, wellbeing and social care outcomes.
- 4.7. Delivered the third **Commissioning Academy for Elected Members** at Warwick. 10 delegates attended to work with a range of speakers to understand and explore key policy issues and challenges on commissioning in their councils.
- 4.8. Published a guide for councillors and senior managers on the new **EU procurement rules**. http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/L15-474+Delivering+savings+-+EU+procurement+rules_v03+%28002%29.pdf/71ba5095-d386-4cfe-a65c-b6e2a0ff8a0f

5. In addition we:

- 5.1 Commissioned and published a report by iMPower Consulting, looking at how **Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework** is helping to drive improvement in children's service.
- 5.2 Following the 1st Oct transfer of responsibility for delivering **public health services for children aged 5 years from NHS England to local government**, we have:
 - held a conference on 16th Nov exploring the opportunities the transfer brings to **integrate and transform early years and public health services**
 - published a document in which leading practitioners outline the **major implications of the transfer of responsibility**
- 5.3 Held a roundtable discussion jointly with the Alzheimer's Society on the **Prime Minister's 2020 challenge on Dementia**.
- 5.4 Begun negotiations with NHS England, Public Health England, the Department of Health and MIND on the LGA's contribution to the second year of the **Mental Health Crisis Concordat**.
- 5.5 Contributed to the **Mental Health Taskforce**, which will shortly be publishing its findings on improving mental health care and support.
- 5.6 Submitted written evidence to five **Select Committee Inquiries**, including the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the Care Act first-phase reforms and local government new burdens, and the Culture, Media and Sport Committee inquiry into World Class Connectivity.
- 5.7 Successfully lobbied Ministry of Justice to ensure councils remained outside the scope of the expanded **statutory victim's code**.
- 5.8 Signed and circulated a new memorandum of understanding with HMRC governing **data sharing between councils and HMRC**.
- 5.9 Compiled and submitted LGA responses to the Home Office consultations on **Enabling Closer Working between the Emergency Services** and **Reforming the Powers of Police Staff and Volunteers**.

Part 2 – Our own efficiency and effectiveness

Governance

Restructure of Corporate Services and External Communications

6. The transfer of the LGA's ICT Service from Liberata to Brent was completed on 2 November 2015. All staff were trained in the use of the new ICT devices ahead of the transfer which, given the size and scope of change, has been relatively smooth. Brent a team of support staff at LG House, who will remain until Christmas to deal with any issues arising.

Media and Public Affairs

7. Over 100 Council Leaders, Peers and MPs attended the LGA's Annual Parliamentary Reception in November. The LGA was mentioned over 100 times in the Houses of Parliament across October and November.

Media Source	Issue
BBC News, BBC 2,3,4,5, Radio 5 Live news, ITV Online, BBC Online, Mirror Online, Sun, Times, i paper, Guardian, Independent, FT	LGA lines on 100 percent business rate retention were widely reported.
The Guardian	Analyses of the LGA's Spending Review submission as part of a piece about the future of public sector reform.
Guardian, Independent, BBC Online, BBC Radio 5 Live	LGA warnings about the implications for council services if DCLG's department funding savings were replicated for local government.
BBC News, BBC Online	LGA response to the Government's announcement that it's extending funding for councils to assist with the cost of Syrian refugees.
Observer, LBC news	The LGA said there is likely to be a £2.9 billion shortfall in social care funding by 2020 and has called on the Government to take action.
Guardian Online, Independent Online	A letter signed by the leaders of 11 organisations, including the LGA, NHS Confederation, and the Royal College of Nursing, warning against the impact of a £200 million in-year cut to council's public health budgets.
The Express	LGA calls for £210 million from the Government's Winter Resilience Fund to prevent a "bed-blocking" crisis this winter.
The Independent	The LGA's response to a new report by the ResPublica think tank, which warns of a cash crisis facing care homes across the country
The FT	LGA research showing private care home residents pay more than state-funded residents in the same home for the same type of room.
BBC Online, Guardian Online	New transforming care partnerships will see the number of hospitalised patients with learning disabilities and autism falling.
FT, Times, BBC Radio 5 Live	LGA analysis revealing councils have been forced to spend £450m covering a third of all planning applications since 2012. The LGA & British Property Federation called for locally-set planning fees.
The Mail	LGA analysis of the construction skills crisis facing the industry threatening the Government's housebuilding aims.
The Observer	LGA research into how the extension of Right to Buy to housing association tenants will cost £6 billion over the next four years.
BBC Online	LGA Spending Review estimates that by 2020 councils will lose £3b in Section 106 payments under the Government's plan for 200,000 discounted starter homes.
BBC Radio 5 Live	The LGA's lines about how many councils prioritise veterans and their families on housing waiting lists were reported on.
The Times	The LGA's call for tougher powers to tackle rogue landlords.
BBC Radio 4's Today in Parliament	The LGA was mentioned in coverage of a parliamentary debate on devolution.
The Mail on Sunday, Telegraph Online, Guardian	The LGA's calls for a common sense approach to the issue of parents in England who take children out of school for holidays.
Mail Online	LGA warnings about how two in five councils will not have enough primary school places by Sep 2016.
The Times	LGA publication 'Transforming Local Public Services' in a supplement about public sector organisations investing in IT training to meet government cost-efficiency targets.
Guardian, BBC Online, Telegraph Online	Data by the LGA, used to help compile a report into basic online skills and create a heat map of digital exclusion across the UK.
Mail Online, Channel 4 Online	A commitment by the LGA to encourage councils to introduce "blind" recruitment of graduates, as well as applying it to its own recruitment.
BBC Online	LGA response to calls by David Cameron to dramatically speed up the

process for children in care to move in with their adoptive families.

LGA Membership

7. The Chairman will attend the 5th Annual conference of Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands on 11 December. The Chief Executive will visit the following councils during December and January.

11 th Dec	Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands 5 th Annual conference
17 th Dec	Haringey Council
17 th Dec	Newcastle City Council
7 th Jan	Croydon Council
15 th Jan	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Chief Executive's meeting
18 th Jan	Plymouth City Council
18 th Jan	Westminster Council