

MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM CONFERENCE/SEMINAR/FIRE RELATED EVENT

Attendees	Cllr Robinson, Cllr Marshall, CFO Errington
Event	LGA Conference: Birmingham
Date	04 - 06 July
Overview of event	
Annual LGA conference covering a range of topics such as: Brexit, funding; response to major incidents and health and social care integration.	
TOPIC	Local Government Association 12 Month View
Speaker	Organisation
Lord Porter	Local Government Association
Official opening of the conference outlining the agenda for the next few days and emphasising that the strength of the LGA is to present a united voice to government. There was a consistent message from all local authorities that more money was needed for the services they provided to the community.	
Implications for Service	
No particular implications.	
TOPIC	Conference Plenary 1
Speakers	Organisation
Sajid Javid MP	Department for Communities and Local Government
<p>Praised the emergency services and public sector for their role in keeping people safe. He explained that in his view there is a key role for councillors in the Recovery Phase of an emergency and in ensuring the inspection of tower blocks to reassure residents. Grenfell Tower should never have happened and it is an example of what has gone wrong in local government.</p> <p>He stated it was an unprecedented disaster and that it was hard to imagine the impact on survivors. The stay put policy didn't work and in his opinion the country had failed people at Grenfell Towers and that was at every level with: policy, procedures and individuals. The public enquiry will get to truth but it is clear local government was facing crisis. He outlined that there was a duty to speak out about things that aren't working and there is a need to rebuild trust with public.</p> <p>In his opinion government was about serving people not telling people what to do and this was especially true at local community level. Housing crisis is a fact all parties are responsible for. It was vital to match supply with demand as housing in some areas is unaffordable and this encourages inequality. He stated there was a need for 225,000-275,000 new homes per year. The planning process must be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs and is an honest assessment of the requirements for a local area. He announced a consultation on assessing housing needs and that would start with an honest assessment of local needs. It was vital that this was undertaken through a</p>	

transparent process. If housing is unaffordable then local authorities need to think carefully how this issue can be addressed. Real political ambition is important to solve crisis and Local Plans need to be cheaper and simple to produce. Infrastructure costs can stop progress so there is a need to invest in removing this obstacle and the government will make available £2.3b to support development. Further support will be available for ambitious councils and a small number of councils will receive funding. He set a challenge to metro mayors to use their powers to help. The General Election of 2017 result is a call for change, Whitehall will listen. Good leadership is vital and this was clearly shown at Kensington.

Implications for Service

The drive for more new homes is welcome and could ease some of the financial pressures facing the authority through higher council tax revenues. The Service work closely with both constituent authorities to monitor their plans for development.

TOPIC	Implications for Chief Executives in dealing with emergencies
Speakers	Organisation
Joanne Rooney OBE Charlie Parker	Manchester City Council Westminster City Council

Westminster Bridge

The community engagement role is important and it can avoid a vacuum that will be filled by others. At Westminster Bridge the impact on community cohesion was significant and visibility was important. A local authority chief executive needs to be clear on recovery roles. The relationship with the blue light services is important and there is a clear civic leadership role for local government. At Westminster Bridge the impact on the road network and on roadworks was interesting and challenging. What to do with all of the flowers that were left at the scene was an interesting challenge and what to do about them post incident.

The media thirst for information around deaths and injuries needs careful thought. Mutual aid around deaths needs to be considered and potentially leads to international issues. Resilience at lower levels in the organisation was an issue. It is important to prepare properly and arrange training to ensure people have the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective.

Grenfell Tower is seismic in terms of impact. It is clear that the council underestimated the size of the challenges and control was lost within the first 24hrs. There was a vacuum that was filled by others. Kensington & Chelsea need to reflect on lessons learned. The aftermath will take years to sort out. The financial challenges are significant and it is clear that the recovery effort is too big for a business as usual approach.

Manchester Bombing

The Chief Executive was in week 5 of a new role when the incident happened. There were therefore issues around contacts and relationships given she was so new. There were 21,000 people at the arena, mainly children. There were 300 casualties in total which proved to be a real strain. There were clear benefits of Greater Manchester arrangements and the mutual aid that was available for example in setting up a respite centre. The public response was fantastic but highlighted challenges with children from a safeguarding perspective. The mass fatalities cause issues and the coroner is a key player. Having a strong relationship with the coroner before an incident is important. Media management was also an issue and in Manchester they had 5 people dealing with social media with the first 2hrs. Ensuring these resources are in place quickly is an issue as there is the

potential for people to try and exploit the situation through fraud. Fraudulent JustGiving pages were established within hours of the bombing some registered abroad. There was also a real issue with misinformation through social media that caused problems. Undertaking the normal business as usual during the incident also strained the council. It was vital to take a victim centred approach especially when the people involved are from outside the area. The use of Manchester City's football stadium was a good venue to process the families of both survivors and victims. The well-being of staff involved in this kind of work needs to be considered carefully. Tough decisions were made around the vigil and they didn't allow politicians to speak at the event because of the potential controversy. Some key lessons:

- Leadership is not just about managing the media, visibility on the ground is more important.
- Can all organisations stand collectively and say we have done our best?
- Consideration needs to be given to recovery and response at same time.
- Make sure presence felt as Chief executive.

Implications for Service

Some implications for the Local Resilience Forum to consider rather than the FRS.

TOPIC	Beyond Brexit – role for local government
Speakers	Organisation
Gunn Marit Helgerson Ann Widdecombe Andy Burnham Markku Markkula	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities Broadcaster Mayor Greater Manchester Combined Authority EU

Gunn Marit Helgerson

Consistent approach to local authorities in Norway no matter what the size of authority, the smallest is only 250 people. There is real trust in government and it is growing in Norway as opposed to USA and Europe. Adaption to circumstances and providing the public with the ability to influence is key. There is a tight relationship between local and national government which helps. There should be empowerment of local government post Brexit.

Ann Widdecombe

There is still real uncertainty around the Brexit deal. Control of our borders doesn't mean closing borders. An important statistic is 7% of workers in social care are European immigrants. In AW's view there is no such thing as a hard or soft Brexit. We will decide our own laws and repatriation of laws is none negotiable. The Norwegian situation isn't ideal for Britain. Should Brexit mean greater devolution of power to local government? Government will honour signed up for funding commitments. EU law is wide ranging, impacts almost every aspect of life, there is however an opportunity space for local government once we withdraw from the EU.

Andy Burnham

We are living through difficult times at the moment, especially in Greater Manchester. We seem to be living through a political earthquake and a London centric system can't solve it. Brexit vote tells us a lot about how people across the country where feeling. It is clear that the EU was significantly better for some parts of the country than others. We saw a divided country in terms of: age, class, geography. The Government should state that Brexit is an opportunity and provide reassurance to those areas that are feeling the hurt.

Unfortunately English regions are not being given a say. Despite promises David Davis hasn't met the new Mayors to discuss the implications of Brexit. If this isn't addressed it could widen the divide and increase the sense of hurt. The question being asked by the regions is what about us? The whole approach is far too London centric based on the needs of the City. He called for power to be taken from Brussels and passed to the regions. He also called for a fairer approach to regional investment.

Implications for Service

No particular implications although the approach to Brexit and any associated changes to legislation will need to be monitored carefully.

TOPIC	The role of local government in delivering health and wellbeing outcomes for whole communities
Speaker	Organisation
Simon Stevens Merran McRae Beverley Smith Steve Philips	Chief Executive, NHS England Chief Executive, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Chief Executive, North West Leicestershire District Council Director, Newton Europe

Simon Stevens

The health/social care interface is important especially coming into the winter period. Patients that are stuck in hospital are causing pressures across the whole system. There is a requirement to look at all of the social care issues. NHS has received criticism from the National Audit Office on the value being delivered against the additional spending. In order to win the argument about sufficient funding for proper social care it is vital that both the NHS and local authorities are able to demonstrate value.

Merran McRae

There are very different experiences across the country on the Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STP) so generalising is difficult. Some of the problems are that the process feels like it is being done to local authorities rather than them being a full partner. Is the case for prevention fully understood by all parties? Demand management is about shaping demand not just reducing services. Often there is a misunderstanding from those running the STP process about the need for a longer warm up for difficult decisions. Local Authorities can add value to decisions in STP. It should be remembered that not all politicians think short term and some take a longer term view of their local area. Health & Wellbeing boards have a clear leadership role with STP. Lobbying around A&E closures is widespread and seems to have taken the STP teams a little by surprise. Geography can also cause issues as for example North Yorkshire County Council has 3 very different STPs to engage with.

Beverley Smith

With the Nottinghamshire STP there are 6 District Councils (DC) involved which are now operating as equal partners in the process. There is a challenge with the very different cultures that exist between Local Government and Health. The language used is challenging and the number of acronyms can be an issue. Initially there was real scepticism about role of the DC in the STP and what value they could bring. A huge challenge for all involved in the STP is to understand where is the evidence for prevention? It is important that all stakeholders keep repeating the narrative around

prevention. A key objective for the Nottinghamshire STP is the provision of 'safe homes, free of hazards'. In Nottinghamshire there has also been alignment of H&W board objectives with the STP outcomes.

Steve Philips

The role of LA CEOs is important in the STP. A flexible leadership style is required as the scope and scale of the issues involved are significant. There is a need for a rigorous approach to drive through the changes needed. The research shows that over 40% of people who went through the discharge from hospital process had the opportunity for more independent living but there appears to be a bias towards less independent living. The opportunities are significant with millions of pounds in savings for the system if we get the decision making right. The STP is about driving integration in planning and thinking.

Implications for Service

There is an opportunity for the FRS to influence the STP process both directly and through the Health and Wellbeing Board. CDDFRS are involved with the STP and the prevention agenda and discussions are ongoing to get more involved with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

TOPIC	Fair Funding
Speakers	Organisation
Cllr Mark Hawthorne Cllr Claire Kober	Leader Gloucestershire County Council Leader, London Borough of Haringey

Currently the mechanism by which funding is allocated to local authorities is both opaque and complex.

Cllr Claire Kober

Previously the LGA and DCLG were doing well on Business Rates Retention (BRR) and a process for fair funding. Until earlier in the year we had some clarity on BRR and how that will impact on a reduced level of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) but the world has changed. The Government consultation, held in the spring, seemed to be giving an indication of the direction of travel but the Queen's Speech missed out the Local Government Finance Act altogether. What is clear is that agreeing a fair funding deal is a real challenge unless new money is injected into the system. When there is less money about there is a danger that local authorities can be hit twice if the funding model is amended at the same time. There is real pressure on a range of budgets for the Government in areas such as: Health, Police, etc. The only advantage in a pause in BRR is that there is an opportunity to review funding it in the round.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne

What is fair? The system doesn't feel fair as the structure is so opaque. Statistics show that there is a vast difference in the way that funding is applied across the country. Leicestershire County Council could get £100m if it was treated in the same way as Surrey County Council. The lack of transparency in the system causes problems and leads to suspicion and scepticism. It cannot be right that the funding system needs to be propped up by the injection of cash through things like Better Care Fund. We need to start from a blank sheet of paper based on the needs and cost drivers for a local area. Whilst in theory this process sounds simple it could open up a can of worms. When you undertake such an exercise there are always winners and losers and it can be a very difficult position. There is a danger that it could end up on the 'too hard to do' list in Westminster. There is an opportunity to get back to principles of ensuring local authorities are properly funded for the services we provide.

Implications for Service
<p>The issue of how the FRS will be funded going forward now that we have moved under the Home Office is important. We do not know at this stage whether or not there will be an amended approach and whether or not fire will be removed from the BRR scheme. We do know however that as things stand we have a commitment from the Home Office for a funding settlement up to and including 2019/20.</p>