

Our business plan **2010/11**

The LGA Group's five priorities:

Reputation

Innovation and value for money

Local democracy

Economy

Customer service

**We work together to support, promote
and improve local government**

Foreword from the Chairman

Colleagues,

I am delighted to launch the LGA Group business plan for 2010/11, which sets out in one place our focus and five priorities for the year ahead.

We have worked with and listened to councils and lead members to identify the most important issues and where we, as national bodies, can add most value. While we have built on last year's business plan, we now have a greater focus with a fewer number of priorities. Councils are working in the most challenging economic climate of a generation, and this plan positions the LGA Group in the best way to help councils meet those challenges. It details the work which we will be doing around our five priorities on:



- reputation
- innovation and value for money
- local democracy
- economy
- customer service.

Please do take the time to look and familiarise yourself with the business plan. Everything we do, both as individual organisations and collectively, should help achieve these five priorities. We have printed a copy for each of you to keep coming back to throughout the year. It is central to all the work we are doing together to support, promote and improve local government.

Margaret Eaton

Councillor Dame Margaret Eaton DL
LGA Chairman

We are working for:

- a new world of responsibility, choice and local control with **public services redesigned and reshaped around the needs of local places and local people** so they can take responsibility for improving their own lives
- a shift in the balance of power away from central government to local government, with **accountability for public services transferred to the local level**, along with a reduction in the burden of central bureaucracy
- **stronger, more powerful local government**, with councils and elected councillors providing leadership at the centre of new local governance arrangements
- **local public service providers to be freed up from unnecessary controls** so that they can develop tailored responses appropriate to the challenges of their communities
- **local people able to make informed judgements and choices about local services**, with the information and ability to challenge those who provide public services on their behalf
- councils working in fundamentally different ways with their partners to provide **more responsive, more efficient and more innovative public services in a world of tighter public finance**.

Our priorities for 2010/11

To make sure we are responding to the right issues and the diverse landscape of local government, we looked at what councils themselves are saying are their top priorities. We have challenged ourselves on where we as national bodies can add most value.

Reputation - building and maintaining the national and local reputation of councils

To be able to play its full part in the transformation of public services, local government must be strong and confident and seen by local people, the public as a whole and Government, as effective, credible local leaders, service providers and employers.

What we'll do:

Support on key reputational issues

- lobby and campaign to confirm local government's record as the most efficient and innovative part of the public sector
- respond to high profile issues in the national media
- help build councils' capacity and support improvement on specific service issues, including:
 - o children's and adults' safeguarding
 - o safer communities
 - o emergency planning
 - o equalities
- provide direct support to councils with significant performance issues
- help councils manage and enhance their own reputation, responding to the fast-changing world of media and communications.

Being an excellent employer

- represent local authorities to the Government and European and other bodies, influencing, negotiating and lobbying on employment issues
- recruit high calibre graduates into local government
- help councils attract, retain, motivate and reward the workforce, including reaching affordable pay deals that support greater flexibility and productivity
- work with partners to ensure a good value Local Government Pension Scheme.

Additional grant-funded activity:

- Healthy communities programme - IDeA
- Tobacco control programme - IDeA and LACORS
- Cultural services programme - IDeA
- Prevent programme - IDeA.

Innovation and value for money - supporting councils to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness

There are major pressures on local government funding as the Government seeks to balance its books. Tough decisions are needed, but there are also opportunities to lobby for greater flexibility and freedom to reform local government funding. Efficiency gains will need to be driven by greater joined-up working at local level and innovation must be released by putting users at the heart of service design and delivery.

What we'll do:

Funding to deliver the job

- for the 2011-14 funding settlement, make the case for investment in council services as the most cost effective way to deliver better outcomes in local areas
- lobby for reform of the public sector finance system so that councils can raise and spend more funds locally, especially for infrastructure, pressing for an end to ring-fenced grants
- lobby on specific funding issues including adult social care, concessionary fares and Housing Revenue Account reform.

Innovation and efficiency

- work with the Government and councils on Total Place and how a 'whole area' approach can lead to better services at less cost, identifying radical solutions and new models of commissioning, service delivery and asset management, redesigning services around the customer, and reviewing charging policy and the use of trading powers
- support councils in responding in a cost-effective and innovative way to the demands of an ageing population
- support councils in learning from benchmarking to deliver more efficient services

- support councils with key infrastructure and other capital programmes including major housing and waste infrastructure projects
- working with others, develop mutual funds for council investments
- with CLG, recognise and celebrate innovative services through the Local Innovation Awards Scheme.

Additional grant-funded activity:

- Third sector commissioning programme - IDeA
- Efficiency exchange - IDeA
- Building a society for all ages - IDeA.

Local democracy - ensuring councils are at the forefront of greater local decision making on spending priorities and service delivery and leading improvement work across the sector

There is an emerging political consensus that the current highly centralised model of the state is not meeting 21st century needs. Local public services need to be liberated from unnecessary central controls so they can develop tailored responses to the challenges of their communities in a co-ordinated and efficient way. We need a new framework of accountability that liberates public sector partners to work together more effectively, and ensures they are driven by and responsive to the needs of their communities.

What we'll do:

New accountability framework

- lobby for a new local accountability framework for public services with far less inspection and regulation
- campaign on the effectiveness and efficiency of local government, in contrast to the many QUANGOS and central government departments
- building on Total Place, work with councils and their partners to strengthen accountability through new local governance models including the role of scrutiny, and share the lessons from them
- help develop credible and efficient systems for collecting and benchmarking performance and financial data for the whole of local government.

Strengthening local democracy

- lobby to ensure that the future form of regional and sub-regional governance gives councils a central role and support councils which want to work in regional and sub-regional arrangements
- lobby for broad local government powers and encourage their use by councils

- lobby for clearer local decision-making and accountability, including health services, police and fire authorities, libraries and schools
- support councils with youth engagement to ensure strong democracy for the future.

Promoting and supporting local councillors

- deliver programmes for councillors in their strategic roles, including the Leeds Castle programme for Leaders and Chief Executives, and support to enable them to develop their skills on specific services and scrutiny
- support councillor recruitment through the work on the Be A Councillor and Civic Pride campaigns and other work on councillor diversity
- provide updates, briefings and information to councillors about the services they are responsible for.

Additional grant-funded activity:

- Partnership improvement programme - IDeA
- Programme office for the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) - IDeA.

Economy - supporting councils to lead their communities to prosperity in the economic recovery

Leading the local economy is key to leading the local community. In the face of the economic downturn, tighter public spending and the UK's commitments to carbon reduction, more will be expected of local government in providing leadership and generating capital for regeneration.

What we'll do:

Regeneration and growth

- make the case for capital spending and investment in infrastructure, as well as for the planning and investment decisions which influence physical development to be locally driven
- lobby for greater powers for councils to commission public transport and join up transport planning
- support councils with the new statutory roles on spatial planning, economic development and strategic housing
- help develop innovative models for funding infrastructure in a changed financial climate and the leadership and contract management capacity to deliver this
- help councils help businesses through advice on better regulation principles
- lobby to ensure the economic and regeneration benefits from the 2012 games are spread to all communities, not just London and the other games venues
- lobby for a more locally-led approach to public sector decision-making around tourism
- lobby for greater freedom for councils to use their licensing powers to develop their local leisure economy and attract visitors.

Energy and climate

- ensure councils can make homes more energy efficient
- promote local leadership of the transition to a lower carbon economy
- help councils protect against the consequences of a changing climate.

Skills and employment

- lobby on youth unemployment, including the Future Jobs Fund and apprenticeships
- lobby on welfare reform and worklessness
- lobby on the future of skills funding and governance
- help councils tackle worklessness locally, including support with apprenticeships and other ways they as employers can help tackle youth unemployment
- support councils and councillors with their responsibilities following the 16-19 funding transfer.

Additional grant-funded activity:

- Spatial planning and Local Development Frameworks – Planning Advisory Service (PAS)
- Private sector housing – LACORS
- DWP worklessness resources – IDeA
- Support with the Transport Act - IDeA.

Customer service - ensuring the LGA Group enhances the reputation of local government and delivers value for money

With councils facing increasing challenges arising from the economic situation, it is more important than ever that as national organisations we add value.

Through our major change programme **Getting Closer** we will:

- ensure that the LGA Group is more focused on councils and councillors
- further integrate the work of the LGA and the central bodies
- reduce our costs and maximise efficiencies.

What we'll do:

Governance

Establish more effective political governance across the LGA Group:

- work collaboratively with regional and sub-regional groupings of councils
- continue to build effective relationships with special interest groups
- increase use of councillor task and finish groups to work on specific priorities
- improve induction, training and development opportunities for LGA Group lead members.

Customer

Improve our offer to councils and councillors:

- review our priorities and services to ensure that they meet the needs of councils and councillors
- introduce an enhanced range of benefits for LGA member councils
- explore the opportunities to make better use of technology
- implement a new LGA Group contact management system.

Communications

Improve communications with member councils and enhance the LGA Group brand:

- launch and implement a new LGA Group brand
- undertake a comprehensive review of external communication across the LGA Group
- introduce 'LGA member only' access to key information on the LGA website
- make better use of social networking sites.

Efficiency

Maximise resources and reduce costs across the LGA Group:

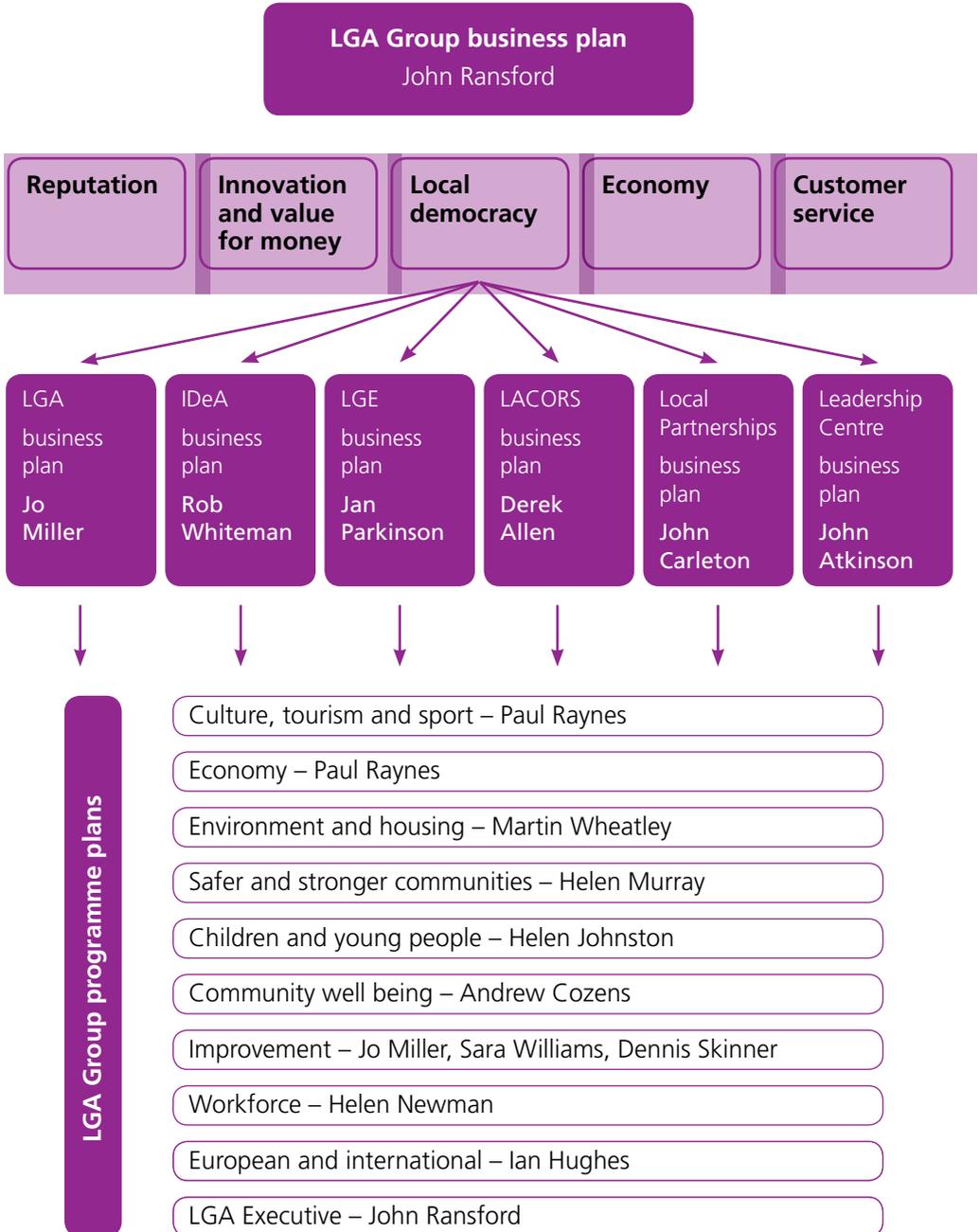
- rationalise and maximise the use of our resources – our people, premises and finances
- identify further opportunities for shared services and collaborative working.

Organisational development

Support our employees to achieve their potential:

- establish LGA Group values and behaviours
- achieve Investors in People
- harmonise business processes.

How we work together across the LGA Group



This will be a year of major change and opportunity as we face the most important general election in over a decade, along with a difficult economic climate and tightening public sector finances.

Our purpose is to work together to support, promote and improve local government during this challenging time.

To ensure we focus our efforts on what matters most to councils and where we can add most value, we have agreed the five priorities set out in this business plan for the LGA Group for 2010/11:

- Reputation - building and maintaining the national and local reputation of councils
- Innovation and value for money - supporting councils to achieve greater local efficiency and effectiveness
- Local democracy - ensuring councils are at the forefront of greater local decision-making on spending priorities and leading improvement work across the sector
- Economy - supporting councils to lead their communities to prosperity in the economic recovery
- Customer service - ensuring the LGA Group enhances the reputation of local government and delivers value for money.

Everything we do, as individual organisations and collectively, should help achieve these five priorities. The business plans of each of the organisations in the LGA Group set out their contribution - the who, what and when - with the boards of each organisation reviewing progress against the business plan in the course of the year.

Increasingly our work across the Group is interlinked. That is why from September 2010 we are establishing new Group programme boards of member councils - to make sure we work together better to deliver the commitments in the LGA Group business plan and that we involve councillors in this. This will build on the programme working that is already happening across the LGA Group and which needs to continue. From April each of the existing LGA policy boards will therefore prepare a programme plan to oversee delivery, drawing together relevant activity from across the Group.

There will always be issues that come up during the year that are difficult to plan for, but aside from these, our efforts and resources must be focused on delivering what we have committed to in the LGA Group business plan.



Local Government Association

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 400 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.



Contact the LGA Group

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