‘Hitting the Ground Running’
Development session for newly elected members

27 June 2019
Welcome

Claire Hogan
Principal Adviser, North West
Introductions and aims of the session

Sir Stephen Houghton
Introductions – Regional Peers

- Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton - Leader, Barnsley Council (Labour)
- Councillor Mike Wilcox - Lichfield District Council (Conservative)
- Councillor Lisa Smart - Deputy Group Leader for the Liberal Democrats, Stockport Council
- Councillor Alan Seldon - Herefordshire Council (Independent)
Aims of the session

• To help you explore your role and give you a wider perspective on your role
• To share learning
• To explain how the LGA supports councils and councillors
Being a good local councillor

“The primary role of a local councillor is to represent their ward or division and the people who live in it.”

“Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council.”

(LGA Councillors’ Guide)
How does it feel now you’ve been elected?

Cllr Mike Wilcox
Key Challenges for Local Government
Sir Stephen Houghton
A brief introduction to Local Government

Councils are complex organisations with an extensive remit; delivering a range of services and statutory duties.

How many statutory responsibilities do you think councils have?

• a) over 200
• b) over 400
• c) over 750
• d) over 1200
Council services

• Councils deliver over 700 services
• Many statutory - councils obligated by law to provide

• Number of non-statutory services too, like community development and economic development.
Changing financial landscape

• Budget reductions - largest in history
• Can’t just salami slice
• Are current delivery models sustainable?
• Commercialisation
• Impact of business rates localisation
• Stronger economic focus
Key challenges

• Demographic changes, ageing population, rising demand & cost of social care
• Housing – balancing demand/supply
• Technological advances – digitalisation, automation, data analytics
• Devolution – harnessing opportunities
• Brexit – E.U funding implications, legal implications, future trade deals
• Changing politics – many more councils have NOC than in the past
Changing services

- More targeted/effective ‘core’ offer
- Personalisation/choice for individual service users
- Working alongside/with communities and other providers to meet local needs
Changing services

Investing in communities to help them solve their own problems:

• Local Businesses
• Social Enterprise
• Voluntary/Community Sector
• Parish Councils
What is the role of the future council?

- Provider – of a ‘core’ offer
- Leader – vision/direction
- Regulator – managing behaviours
- Facilitator – helping things to happen
- Partner – working alongside agencies, Communities, citizens
What is the future role for councillors?

- Local Leaders – of place/behaviours
- Problem Solvers – finding answers locally
- Negotiators – between people, groups, agencies
- Influencing – to achieve outcomes
- Representing – to council and to others
- Building participation – active communities
Member and officer roles
Member and officer roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What all Members can expect from Officers</th>
<th>What Officers can expect from Members</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A commitment to the authority as a whole, not to an individual political group</td>
<td>Political leadership and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A working partnership</td>
<td>A working partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>A timely response to enquiries and complaints</td>
<td>Compliance with ethical standards and probity requirements</td>
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<td>Professional advice not influenced by political views or preference</td>
<td>Non-involvement in the day to day management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality</td>
<td>Respect, dignity and integrity, but no special consideration</td>
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</table>
The future of local democracy

• From corporate to community governance?
• From leading/managing the Council to leading and supporting places?
Questions
What are the challenges in your patch?
Councillor Lisa Smart and Councillor Alan Seldon

“I just want to speak to the council!”
This exercise is a virtual walk around your ward, which looks at the type of place it is, what happens there and how people know what is going on.
“Exploring one member’s journey”

Councillor Oliver Ryan
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Who Am I?

Policy generalist with a belief in local government, good public services, rational and cost effective decision making and visible delivery for residents for the betterment of lives!
Looking back…

This is a journey, not a destination.

• What would you like to achieve in your first term?

• What are you passionate about?

• What is your ambition? Why are you doing this?

We all need a purpose, to keep you going and to keep enjoying it!
Waters won’t always be smooth!
THANK YOU

RANDOM CITIZEN
Understanding the Politics...

Real World vs

Group World vs

Council World vs

Party World

Prioritise – you can’t balance it all and manage everyone's relationships and views!
Residents will often expect you and the authority to be more powerful than you are. You are powerful, but control expectation.

People by and large don’t know what we do, be open and self-explanatory about governance, role and process.

Talk to as many people with as many views as you can, people value genuine interest and help regardless of politics.
The “Group World” Politics...

Embrace it – it’s a way to get things done.

But always be aware of internal politics, cliques, groups within groups – know what you’re getting into and don’t lose your voice.
“Council World” and Officers...

Some officers are more effective than others. Take time to learn.
“Party World” and high politics...

Balancing these demands with those of your residents will be key to you ensuring your own position as both an advocate for your electors and a representative of your party.
Enjoy it and be the change!

Any Questions?
Local Government Finance
(without numbers)

Helen Seechurn, NW FISA

27 June 2019
Background

- Government funding is reducing, real terms 50% reduction since 2010
- Funding shortfall of about 15% by 2025, not to replace lost funding but to maintain current levels
- Government controls public spending

But…..

- Councils have responded in different ways to austerity and the beauty of local government is no two councils are the same
# The Basics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue  (day to day expenses)</th>
<th>Capital (things that last)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing services</td>
<td>Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying benefits</td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repaying debt and interest</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vehicles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plant &amp; machinery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government grants</td>
<td>Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business rates</td>
<td>Capital receipts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax</td>
<td>Borrowing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charges for services</td>
<td>Developer contributions / planning gain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>Revenue (see above)</td>
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“Ring-fencing”

- Some funding can only be used for specified purposes
  - Some grants eg. Dedicated Schools Grant
  - Council Housing rents
  - Income from parking fines
Budgets

- Finance doesn’t spend the money
- It is the product of decisions taken by others
- Expect to see budget monitoring reports
- Ask questions
- Responsibility to set annually balanced budgets
- CFO to provide assurance

"Yes sir, you can absolutely trust those numbers"
Statutory Finance Officer

• A fiduciary role
• Chief finance officer or ‘Section 151’
• Usually the head of the council’s finance function and central in providing:
  – Effective financial advice to councillors and officers
  – Organising and maintaining a sound system of financial governance and control
  – Ensuring that the council follows all of its legal duties in financial matters.
Reserves

- Councils (unlike eg NHS Trusts) are allowed to hold reserves
- Reserves are (what everyone else calls) savings
- Councils need reserves
  - To manage risk
  - To set funding aside for future projects
  - Simply to carry money forward
- Money in reserves is someone’s taxes locked away

The level of reserves should be considered at budget time and reported in the annual accounts

Requirement of s151 Officer to report on their adequacy
Governance

• Making decisions in the right way
• Supporting transparency - Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, External Audit
• Ensuring value for money and transparency of decisions
• Procurement processes
The Councillor’s Role

• Make sure money is used wisely and well
• Agree MTFS, annual budget and savings
• Set Council Tax
• Set borrowing and investment policies
• Scrutinise financial decisions
• Receive audit reports
Coming soon to a local authority near you….

- **Fair Funding Review**
  - Government review of the formula for distributing funding between councils

- **Business Rates Retention review**
  - Review of the share of business rates growth retained by councils

Consultation papers possibly before end of July
The role of the LGA and how the LGA can help

Dan Archer, Programme Manager, North-West
The LGA – our purpose

The LGA is the national voice of local government. We work with councils to support, promote and improve local government.

We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to councils so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems.
Our priorities

• Funding for local government;
• Adult social care and health;
• Children, education and schools;
• Housing;
• Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution;
• Britain’s exit from the EU; and,
• Supporting councils.
Politically led…

Lord Porter of Spalding CBE, LGA Chairman

Cllr Nick Forbes, Labour Group Leader and LGA Senior Vice-Chair

Cllr James Jamieson, Conservative Group Leader and LGA Vice-Chairman

Cllr Howard Sykes MBE, Liberal Democrat Group Leader and LGA Vice-Chair

Cllr Marianne Overton MBE, Independent Group Leader and LGA Vice-Chair
**Sector Led Improvement – the offer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Social Care</th>
<th>Finance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Devolution</td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s Services</td>
<td>Workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A few examples that could be of use to you from today….

@LGAComms
@LGANews
@LGAChildren

…and so on…
Your Questions………

• Claire Hogan, LGA Principal Adviser
• Councillor Alan Seldon, Independent Regional Peer
• Councillor Lisa Smart, Liberal Democrat Regional Peer
• Councillor Mike Wilcox, Conservative Regional Peer
• Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton, Labour Regional Peer
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Thank you & close