

Local Government Association INDEPENDENT GROUP

Election of Group Leader 2015-17

Statement of Ian D Luder

Dear Colleague

I am seeking your support for my candidacy as Group Leader for the coming two years, because I believe that I can build on our current position, make a real difference, and ensure that as a Group we punch above our weight now that we have become the third largest group within the LGA.

I have been an elected member since 1976, and served on the City of London Corporation since 1998. I was Sheriff in 2006-07, Lord Mayor in 2008-09 and currently chair the City Gardens & Open Spaces Committee, which has ultimate responsibility for 11,500 acres of public open space. Areas such as Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and the Surrey Commons, acquired by our forefathers to safeguard them from "green field" development.

Over the past few years, I have been active within the LGA, serving as the Independent Group nominee on the LGA Resources Panel, and then the Audit Committee (each for four year terms) and in this past session, a non exec on the Board of Local Partnerships LLP, until I had to stand down to fight South Basildon & East Thurrock in the recent General Election.

The next few years are going to see fundamental changes in the relationship between Central and Local Government, which inevitably will lead to pressure for reorganisation of the existing structure of local government.

I believe it is essential that

- a) the LGA speaks with a powerful voice, which reflects the views of constituent authorities
- b) that our electors are consulted on any changes in the local framework of authorities, and the " Manchester model " is not seen as a one size fits all solution.
- c) that if further powers are devolved to London, it is not used as an opportunity to swallow up the surrounding commuter belt, without local referenda in support of such change

- d) the growth of City Regions does not endanger the Green Belt and lead to urban sprawl and ribbon development. The LGA needs to press for brown field site development to be facilitated by subsidising decontamination costs.
- e) devolution of responsibilities is accompanied by a like transfer of revenue streams, and not used as a further means of inflicting budgetary reductions on the sector.

I am a Chartered Accountant by background, but now concentrate on public service. If elected as Leader, I will be a visible presence not only in Smith Square, but also in the regions. I will aim to work closely with Independent Groups throughout the country, and especially with those colleagues who are making breakthroughs into urban and City authorities, previously treated as “no-go” areas. I will also build our communications to enable greater interface amongst group members, between the dates of our various conferences and meetings.

My watchwords will be Accessibility, Approachability and Availability, and I very much hope that you will be able to give me your support.