

Summary from the meeting on 4 November 2014 of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance.

Committee Independent Commission on Local Government Finance

Present

Commissioners

Darra Singh (Chair) ,Alan Downey, Stephen Lewis, Tony Travers, Jonathan Portes, Stephen Hughes ,Bridget Rosewell

Secretariat

Eamon Lally (LGA), Joanne Pitt (CIPFA)

Invited

Nicola Morton (LGA),Michael Lock wood (LGA) Richard Vize

Apologises

Anita Charlesworth, Paul Gray, Rob Whiteman

Summary

Chair thanked all the commissioners who have supported these events.

The commission discussed who needs to be engaged with as part of the interim report and made suggestions.

The commission has held meetings on the following subjects:

1. Housing
2. Growth
3. Integration of Health and Social care

Feedback on these meetings was that the general tone of the responses was realistic rather than radical.

Housing – Led by Tony Travers

Discussion often technical and based on modest demands.

Nothing suggested will solve the problems faced so the Commission needs to be explicit about what will happen if we can't find a solution to these problems. For example lifting the cap would raise the head room but could still not allow the 200,000 homes need to be built.

Is there evidence already produced to support the commission. Suggestions were:

- London Infra structure Plan
- Shelter Report
- Mirrlees Review

The discussion then focused around the redefinition of the accounts as a solution. Jonathan Portes has recently carried out considerable work on this topic and DS asked JP if he would have a short summary available for the other commissioners on this view and could that be shared with the group for background reading

Growth –led by Stephen Hughes

Stephen Hughes was pleased with the turn out but the interim report still needs to be covered with CBI and Chamber of Commerce

There was a clear appetite for more development but evidence was difficult to obtain.

The report by John Peace Commission on devolution due out next week may contain insights and should be noted.

Health and Social Care led by Anita Charlesworth

It was decided that this would be discussed at the next meeting as Anita Charlesworth was not at the meeting

Media Update by Simon Ward

Commissioners pleased with coverage from the released of the interim report. Trade press focussed on the self-sufficiency and urgent need to reform.

The Times focused on the revaluation and council tax reform.

Going forward there will be pieced in the Guardian on line and both the LFA and CIPFA magazines are running articles.

Towards a Final Report

Commission referred to slides provided to the group.

Time table is very tight. Report now to be published by the end of February.

More work needs to be carried out around the area of incentives

Consultation ends at the end of November commission needs to encourage additional responses

Chairman comments that the commission focuses on BR and CTx as this is the start of the journey.

Discuss on business case to be included as part of the report. Nicola Morton to consider this for the commission and identify what could be achieved in the time scale

Stephen Lewis felt that this tied into the vision that the commission had set. The Commission's discussions around devolution conclude that it was considering a possible form of devolution model. Stephen Lewis considered how much the suggested model would be from the Scottish model and discussed use of a gap analysis.



**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION
ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE**

Although as discussed the commission's framework was council tax and business rates commission agreed that it needs address the wider context and be ambitious.

AOB

Next meeting December 1st