

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT - A NEW DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

The Conservative Green Paper on International Development, "*One World Conservatism*", talks about many issues that are typically the realm of local government: poverty reduction, public service accountability and effective performance, community stabilisation, and economic development.

Working with local government to strengthen governance and deliver more effective services at the local level offers a new way forward in international development - a way of delivering results directly to people. The reality of poverty is *locally specific* within countries. Local government is a key actor to address the Green Paper's aims of better value, wealth creation and stabilisation.

It is important that local government is recognised as part of the solution to development challenges. By working together with our front-line workers - from the strategic roles of councillors and senior managers, to the specific technical expertise of environmental health officers, carers, planners, teachers, engineers and others - we can ensure that those with *proven experience* of delivering effective public services at home can play a role in delivering the UK's development programmes.

The UK Local Government Alliance for International Development (LG Alliance)<sup>1</sup> is inviting politicians to look to local government to help the UK deliver on international development – to work with local government actors at home and abroad – to produce locally democratic and sustainable development on the ground.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFER

Local government in the UK has a unique skills-base that could be used to help developing countries move away from aid dependency towards supporting long-term self-sufficiency.

Through technical exchanges and collaborative projects we can support:

- **Good local governance** – building accountable, participatory and capable local councils that promote community wellbeing
- **Effective service delivery** – provision of core services for all, especially young people and women, e.g. health, housing, transport, environment, culture, economic development and employment
- **Empowered people and local actors** – building understanding, engagement, coordination and exchange with local people, business and other public sector providers, locally and globally
- **Building understanding in local communities** – we can help promote the importance and relevance of international development to local people in the UK

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Local Government Alliance for International Development (LG Alliance) brings together five local government bodies in the UK to provide a single voice for local government in relation to international development. The LG alliance includes: the Commonwealth Local Government Association (CLGF), the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA), the Local Government Association (LGA), the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

The section below outlines our proposed contribution, highlighting existing examples of international support, in relation to the three priority areas of the Green Paper:

- Value for money
- Wealth creation
- Stabilisation

### VALUE FOR MONEY

#### Evaluation and transparency

We agree that the whole DFID programme needs a root and branch review. There are a number of key messages that we have been giving DFID over the last few years to make the aid programme more effective which have largely been ignored:

- Clearer understanding of where local government delivers basic services in the developing world and the needs for investment in good governance at this level;
- The demand from councils abroad for support from experienced UK front-line practitioners with an understanding of the local government context;
- Generating more “pay-back” into UK public sector through secondments and volunteering of public sector staff.

*Our experience:* Local government is the most effective part of the public sector in terms of evaluation and transparency, including peer reviews, public scrutiny and continual audit, internally and externally.

*Our offer:* We can help the International Development review. We offer an independent view of aid programmes, and have recently reformed and reviewed all our international bodies – CLGF, Local Government International Bureau (now incorporated into the LGA). In particular, the LGA Chair, Margaret Eaton, has offered to sit on the Independent Aid Watchdog to review Aid programmes.

#### **Global case studies**

**1. Transparency of public services** - Leicester City council worked with Rajkot City, India, with support from Commonwealth Local Government Forum's (CLGF) Good Practice Scheme in two new wards. The council consulted with the community to plan and agree levels of water provision since the council was not satisfied that the two new wards had access to the same water services as other areas. Leicester and Rajkot officials jointly implemented the new strategy in a pilot area and worked with the community on local management and monitoring processes. As part of the project the local Leicester community met with their partners to also learn from Rajkot, further strengthening the ties between the cities.

**2. Monitoring good local governance** – LG Alliance partners have provided support to local government associations in developing countries to ensure a national approach to monitoring and evaluation. For example, the LGA, when engaging with international partners, undertakes a **scoping exercise** to assess key governance indicators at the local level. Such indicators include: openness of democratic process to public scrutiny; responsiveness of local government to communities; degree of decision making-power and autonomy in local government and supplied from local government to community groups e.g. traditional leaders.

#### **Output-based Aid**

We agree there is a need to develop the most effective aid programme, where we are pressing for the highest percentage of spend to be at the front-line to have greater and more targeted outputs.

Our experience: Local government in the UK has been working to cut back on centralised Whitehall bureaucracy and inefficiencies. We are constantly making performance improvements, in terms of value for money and innovative practice to better support our local people.

Our offer: To work with the UK, donors and developing country governments to improve the local impact of aid through promoting a cost effective targeted way of helping those that deliver front line services.

### **Global case study- Focusing on programmes at the frontline**

Bo and Makeni, in Sierra Leone and Warwickshire are collaborating on waste management – planning and delivering the service, raising public awareness of the need to dispose of waste safely and improving the landfill arrangements. UNDP has co-contributed to the scheme (providing the capital support) Warwickshire council provides the capacity building support, which enables officials to be properly trained to manage, use and maintain new equipment to make the service more efficient and reduce cases of malaria and similar diseases.

### **Greater focus of Aid**

We recognise the need to focus attention on those areas where the UK can have greatest impact. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum, a member of the UK Local Government Alliance for International Development (LG-Alliance) works to support development programmes throughout the Commonwealth, with support from other LG Alliance members. Through incoming and outgoing secondments and short-term placements local government can also make a substantial contribution to improving the public administration in the Overseas Dependencies.

Our experience:

- CLGF membership includes central government ministries and national local government associations and supports north-south and south-south activities across the Commonwealth.
- The LGA has been exploring with DFID and FCO the potential role that local government can play in providing advice and training for counterparts in the Overseas Dependencies.

Our offer:

- LG-Alliance members, including the CLGF, offer our support in delivering UK development objectives in the Commonwealth
- LG-Alliance offers to engage with wider cross-Whitehall cooperation in supporting the British Overseas Territories

### **Global case study: Pro-poor targeted local development**

With access to the appropriate chemicals, local government in Zimbabwe has been able to reverse the spread of cholera. In India a focus on solid waste management in cities is also helping to do this. The Gates Foundation has recognised that putting money alone into health projects is not sufficient without also treating the *causes* of poor health. It is adopting a forward-looking development programme to target community strengthening.

### **Tax payer control**

We welcome the proposed 'Health Systems Partnership Fund' and suggest that this model could be expanded to include the whole public sector, tapping into wider expertise and know-how.

Our experience: UK public practitioners are already working in programmes, such as the CLGF Good Practice Scheme and VSO, with real benefits to communities and councils both in developing countries and the UK.

## UK LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Our offer: We offer to develop a “Public Sector Partnership Fund” model to demonstrate rich expertise available to support UK development objectives.

### **Respect and responsiveness**

We recognise that it is key at a time of recession, to secure consent and understanding of UK public for aid. We can help the government popularise the work through coordinating city-wide responses, engaging volunteers and communicating aid programmes to schools and local actors.

Our experience: UK councils are strategic convenors of local groups, bringing together local actors via Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Local and Multi-Area Agreements (LAA and MAAs. Councils promote community engagement via neighbourhood management, community funds, along with participatory tools (budgets, planning and appraisals).

Our offer:

- UK councils can play a coordinating role for community international development work.
- We could support placements with local council staff / councillors in developing countries as a part of ‘Poverty Immersion’ experiences.
- UK councils could promote the “National Citizen Service” locally through schools, businesses and community groups.
- councils can exchange know-how and good practice with international partners in relation to participatory tools and pro-poor financial innovation

### **Global case study: CLGF Good Practice Scheme (GPS)**

GPS is a DFID funded programme supporting the development of local government capacity in the areas of governance and service delivery. The GPS funds local government projects based on the principles of technical exchange, joint learning, and testing new approaches. The programme is now in phase three and will be operating in six different countries – Ghana, India, Jamaica, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and South Africa. Overall there will be up to 34 projects, including local and national exchanges. At the national level the LGA is working with the South African LGA (SALGA), as well as the newly created Local Councils Association of the Punjab in Pakistan. The exchange between SALGA and the LGA is looking to share experiences of how local government can address the economic crisis.

### **Climate change**

We strongly support a focus on climate change – where an estimated 80% of CO2 emissions are derived from growing urban conurbations. Effective urban governance is crucial to managing the effects of climate change.

Our experience: Councils across the country are leading the way on climate change, in planning, fighting fuel poverty, low carbon housing and infrastructure, micro-generation, as well as impact assessment and sustainability appraisal tools, along with risk management and adaptation preparedness.

Our offer: We offer a pool of practitioners with good practice / know-how on: low carbon planning and development, as well as integrated climate strategies joining up mitigation and adaptation in local and regional areas.

### **Global case study: Facing the climate challenge:**

CLGF, Microsoft and the Government of Jamaica worked together to support councils in their emergency planning during hurricane season. They undertook a joint project to store mobile numbers and alert people to go to shelters if a hurricane was predicted.

### WEALTH CREATION

#### Response to the downturn

The local government sector in developing countries requires support from Global agencies, such as the World Bank and IMF, in order to face up to the impacts of the global economic slow-down.

Our experience: The LGA is working with the world association of local government (United Cities and Local Government) to assess the impact of the economic downturn locally and develop a strategic global response for local government.

Our offer: to support a UK government dialogue with the local government sector globally, to review and enhance EuropeAID and World Bank programmes.

#### Building blocks of wealth creation – building from the base

We agree that development programmes must focus on building self-sufficiency and economic capacity. Local government provides a vital role here in terms of supporting local economic recovery and stimulating new and innovative industries.

Our experience: UK Councils provide a critical role in terms of local procurement, supporting SMEs and microfinance, facilitating trade missions, training and skills development. They can also stimulate innovative and green local economies and employment.

Our offer: LG-Alliance offers to work with local councils and national local government associations in developing countries, along with local government ministries, to help to strengthen local economic wellbeing.

#### **Global case study: Scaling up local good practice**

A project between the London Borough of Lewisham and Ekurhuleni, South Africa tackled local unemployment through a job brokerage scheme, supporting both job seekers as well as small businesses. It saw more than 1000 people back into work and a 7.3% rise in manufacturing employment locally. South Africa's national Department for Labour supported the project and rolled it out to other areas across the Gauteng province. The Office of the Deputy President then supported a national roll out of the Lewisham/ Ekurhuleni model over two years. The project also led to Lewisham examining its own business support systems, adopting a more flexible and responsive approach.

### CONFLICT, STABILISATION AND PEACEKEEPING

#### Working together to achieve development

We welcome the call for partners to work together in stabilising fragile and post conflict countries. Strengthening democracy at the local level provides a critical building block for state stability and reconstruction. In its role as a community leader, local government can help build cohesive communities. Local government can also target areas that build local capacity and help prevent community breakdown and conflict e.g. stimulating employment in young people.

Our experience: The LGA has been working closely with DFID's Stabilisation Unit to seek out civilian volunteers from local government to work in fragile and post-conflict areas. The LGA is confident there is a sizeable pool of talented individuals in local government with the required technical expertise and experience of working in conflict areas. It has already been in contact with local government personnel who have skills in the areas required by the Stabilisation Unit and have served in the military on a full-time basis or as reservists.

Our offer: LGA to work with DFID, FCO and Whitehall to tap-into the know-how and human resource base in the public sector.

#### For further information contact:

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