

Local Opportunity, National Benefit

The Bruce-Lockhart Lecture 2012

Rt Hon Lord Howard CH QC



About Localis

Who we are

Localis is an independent think-tank dedicated to issues related to local government and localism. We carry out innovative research, hold a calendar of events and facilitate a growing network of members to stimulate and challenge the current orthodoxy of the governance of the UK.

Our philosophy

We believe in a greater devolution of power to the local level. Decisions should be made by those most closely affected, and they should be accountable to the people which they serve. Services should be delivered effectively. People should be given a greater choice of services and the means to influence the ways in which these are delivered.

What we do

Localis aims to provide a link between local government and the key figures in business, academia, the third sector, parliament and the media. We aim to influence the debate on localism, providing innovative and fresh thinking on all areas which local government is concerned with. We have a broad events programme, including roundtable discussions, publication launches and an extensive party conference programme.

Find out more

Please either email info@localis.org.uk or call 0207 340 2660 and we will be pleased to tell you more about the range of services which we offer. You can also sign up for updates or register your interest on our website.

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Introduction

Alex Thomson,
Chief Executive
of Localis



Sandy Bruce-Lockhart was a giant of local government, respected by colleagues across the political divide, and in central and local government alike. Localis has a long-standing relationship with Kent County Council and Sandy was one of our earliest supporters when we were established over a decade ago. We are proud to again support the lecture established in his name.

For the second year running, the Bruce-Lockhart scholar spoke brilliantly about the future for local government and how they have put their £10,000 scholarship to good use. We are delighted to offer a platform for such an excellent programme. For local government to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, it will require officers with real drive and creativity. Both Paul Knight, winner of the 2011/12 scholarship, and last year's scholar Rachel Allen, have that in spades.

This leads me on to Lord Howard's excellent speech, presented in this pamphlet. As a former Leader of the Opposition, Home Secretary and Minister for Local Government, among numerous other positions, he is a man with a wealth of experience of government. Lord Howard superbly articulates many of the challenges facing local government, but also correctly identifies the opportunities on offer for local leaders. In particular, he describes a new style of local leadership focusing on the economic and civic, which he correctly describes as national imperatives at a local level.

Or, as the title of this pamphlet puts it, Local Opportunity, National Benefit.

The Bruce-Lockhart Lecture 2012

Local Opportunity, National Benefit



by Rt Hon Lord Howard CH QC
18/10/2012

Introduction

The Bruce-Lockhart Leadership Programme is in itself an excellent example of local government leadership. It shows some of the best in local government today coming together to support the leaders and senior officers of tomorrow. You might notice that I didn't say Chief Executives!

We have just seen Paul Knight, the second officer winner, present on his year's work and a very worthy recipient he has proved to be.

He has been joined this year by the first Bruce-Lockhart "Member" Scholar, Shona Johnstone from Cambridgeshire County Council. Shona's scholarship was announced in February at the LGIU's Councillor of the Year Awards and will enable her to explore how localism can be delivered in new communities – areas where housing is planned and where the communities simply do not yet exist.

And then we have last year's Scholarship winner Rachel Allen who captivated us last June with her moving tale of professional and personal development.

Soon to be joining Rachel, Paul and Shona will be this year's winner, Cornwall's Hannah Rees, whom we look forward to hearing from in 12 months time.

This new generation of leaders and officers will, I am sure, find their roles in years to come as challenging as your own. But at the same time, I believe theirs will be a very different role, presenting its own set of challenges and opportunities. Many of these will be shaped by the actions you take today as leaders of local government, as I will come on to later.

Sandy Bruce-Lockhart



I am, of course, especially delighted to be here to honour Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, who led Kent County Council and the LGA so magnificently for so many years.

It is both a privilege and a challenge to have been asked to give the second Bruce-Lockhart Lecture. I knew Sandy for many years, both as a fellow politician and as a personal friend. I benefited from his wisdom on very many occasions.

As a politician, Sandy was a titan of local government. As a friend, I got to know a very private man whose family was a continual source of joy and inspiration. They also kept Sandy's feet firmly on the ground. He would often quote the keyring Tess (who I am delighted

to see here tonight) had given him early in his political career. On one side was printed: "The problem with political jokes is..." and on the other: "...they get elected"! Perhaps a salutary reminder to us all.

Winning the Peace

In delivering the second Bruce-Lockhart lecture today, I follow in the footsteps of the new Financial Secretary to the Treasury Greg Clark. I listened closely to Greg's speech last year as I am sure we all did. He said "the greatest tribute we can pay to Sandy's memory today is to tear down barriers to local innovation". He made clear that "Westminster and Whitehall do not have the monopoly on good ideas". He continued that "councils should be given the right to make proposals to the Government as to how things could be done differently" – what Greg dubbed "a right of initiative".

So how has the Government measured up? How have you? What has changed in a year? What other factors continue to influence how you act? And what is the real opportunity presented for leadership at a local level?

What difference a year makes

Undoubtedly the Coalition Government has gone a long way to creating a new environment for local government. I appreciate not all councils will agree with all changes; indeed many of you may wish to go further still.

But if you were to transport yourself back to Sandy's heyday what a difference we would now see:

- A Localism Act introducing a general power of competence – a seismic shift effectively giving councils the power to do almost anything other than break the law;
- A Local Government Finance Bill enabling half of the business rate growth you collect to remain in your council area;
- The end of regional government;
- New responsibilities for public health;
- City Deals cracked for growth and jobs; and much more.

So we have a Government that has advanced significantly further along the devolutionary trail. But we also exist in tough economic times. I am encouraged that Sir John Major saw the green shoots of economic recovery last month, but we still need to coax and encourage more business growth and new private sector jobs. We need to re-balance, re-model and re-build an economy truly fit for the 21st Century.

And, in the public sector, you know better than I do the financial challenges you face with the continued need for austerity within public services, balancing one very real local demand against another. I don't underestimate these challenges - as a sector you have coped admirably.

What is the local opportunity?

But taken together what does this heady mix of localism, the need for growth and continued austerity add up to? It is an equation where there are variables and there are unknowns (known and unknown), but could the answer be greater than the sum of its parts? I believe it could.

I want to argue that these events have created a "perfect storm", a unique combination of factors producing a situation of unexpected magnitude. Unlike the film of the same name, however, I don't believe the boat will sink!

Together, these components open the door to a new brand of local leadership – one that looks afresh at the opportunities out there and applies them to grow local economies and strengthen local communities. One that takes advantage of the need to cut and re-shape the services it delivers. One that encourages and grows the next generation of local Leaders. No-one can do this better than you.

Local leadership will be vital on several important fronts. We want to win the peace as Greg said last year, but the fight is not over and we first need to win the war. Let me explain my argument further.

The (local) politics of yesterday, the opportunity of today

First, your relationship with Government has changed fundamentally. Gone are many of the performance frameworks. Gone are the regional assemblies and the Government offices. Gone are many of

the staff employed to check up and manage you from Whitehall and the Government Offices.

We have Ministers who believe the DCLG should exist to work for you, if indeed they believe it should exist at all! Government can't - and should never again attempt to - micromanage as it did before. So national government has changed, but has local government? Perhaps I should whisper this, has the LGA? How are you dealing with Government? Has your approach changed? Of course in some councils this will have happened effortlessly, but has local government yet changed as a sector?

I am reminded of a story relayed by a previous Head of the No 10 Policy Unit. A council leader had pursued a meeting with the Prime Minister through every possible route. His tenacity and drive were unwavering. Eventually he secured his 30 mins with the PM and Head of Policy. He sat across the table from them, eyed them closely and began. Half an hour later he finished. The meeting had ended with the PM and Head of Policy saying little. The Leader had relayed his problems but little else. What was he proposing? Why did he want the meeting? What was he expecting the PM to say? Cathartic perhaps, but dated then, and hopefully now complete anathema.

The door to national government should always be open. But local government must be encouraged to innovate, to be clear about its intentions and to identify the practical obstacles in its path. National government must then act to overcome these wherever it can. It must enable local innovation to flourish and remove the dead hand of Whitehall, trusting instead in local democracy to put in place whatever checks and balances may be necessary. Taking this further, I would argue that local government now lives in an opportunity society. Some may call it a permissive society!

The culture of government has changed. Leaders should no longer wait for national approval to take local action; no longer ask for sweeping new powers when the power to do almost anything through the power of competence rests in your own hands; no longer seek meetings with the PM only to tell him your problems when all he and Ministers really want is to get out of the way of your solutions.

I'm sure many of you are blazing a trail in this direction already. I would argue that all councils should.

“Leaders should no longer wait for national approval to take local action”

The economics of debt

The national economic situation undoubtedly provides a challenging backdrop. But it also presents an opportunity for local government. Fortune, I hope, will favour the brave. But first, why are we faced with this economic situation?

I know I am joined here by members of all political parties and of none. What I will give you therefore is a personal commentary. But it is one informed by my time as Leader of HM Opposition, as Shadow Chancellor and from my current vantage point in the Lords.

**“These are indeed
unprecedented times”**

These are indeed unprecedented times and the Coalition’s focus on deficit reduction has to be right. It should not be deflected. Already it has cleared one quarter of the budget deficit it was faced with. Of course we needed to borrow to invest, but the family that borrows and spends way beyond its means is one destined for trouble. When crisis calls - which it so predictably will - even the family debt counsellor will have problems working out the payment plan. Or, as Warren Buffett so vividly described, it’s only when the tide goes out that you can see who is swimming naked!

As I said when Leader of the Opposition, we saw credit card budgets (from a credit card chancellor). With £1 borrowed for every £4 we spent when the Coalition took control there was no doubt the party had to end and there was always going to be a hangover. But many of you in local government have your own experiences of this.

When Sandy took over from the LibDem/Labour administration in Kent, he was immediately presented by his Finance Director with a Section 151 notice, effectively saying the council was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. A learning point, perhaps, that not all Coalitions are successful!

The need for austerity and the opportunity to rethink

So there is clearly a need for austerity. That is why local government funding has reduced. Almost a decade ago Sir Peter Gershon identified you as the most efficient part of the public sector. The challenge now is even bigger and it calls not just for efficiency but a wholesale re-think of many of the services local government provides.

When I was leader of the Conservative Party, I initiated the James Review. The James Committee identified £35 billion of savings across the public sector. It was controversial at the time and some of the figures were hotly disputed by my political opponents.

The siren claim of the time was that it was simply not possible to make such savings and improve services at the same time. More for less could not be done. Across almost all political divides, this claim would today simply be brushed aside. How very “last decade” it now sounds!

Through innovation and better spending of public money, considerable savings can be made and public services can be improved. As we look back, we can see that the vast majority of the James proposals have been implemented.

The James Committee also looked at how some policies and services could be re-engineered. As Leader of Kent, Sandy Bruce-Lockhart led the work on Local Government and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Sandy’s chapter encompassed much of what you would now expect: freedom from burdensome inspection, major savings from better local government procurement, back office and regulation and the end of regional assemblies. He even proposed the abolition of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, a policy I understand a number of my parliamentary colleagues may wish to resurrect! But what impressed me most was Sandy’s desire to drive reform. His was not simply a slash and burn cost cutting exercise, it was an opportunity to propose how things could be done differently.

For example, Sandy wanted to refocus the major housing and regeneration programmes of the time. He wanted reform to bring about change which would encourage people to become property owners and property renovators. He believed the programmes of the time could lock people into sub-market housing, potentially reducing labour mobility and lowering standards of build. He wanted to support first time buyers and to encourage a “staircase” to home ownership. Sandy wanted an opportunity society where there was a level playing field for all. His later work for the Centre for Social Justice on welfare reform and for Localis amongst others bore this same trademark.

The opportunity is now there for us all. Challenging times call

“Sandy wanted an opportunity society where there was a level playing field for all”

for creative solutions. The “same old, same old” simply will not do. And it’s not simply cost pressures. Localism is already re-shaping the dynamic of many of the public services you deliver.

“The opportunity is now there for us all. Challenging times call for creative solutions”

The growth of Academies and Free Schools is hollowing out the Local Education Authorities of old. The growth of personal budgets in social services and for special educational needs is changing the relationship of service users with councils and the new Right to Challenge will further open up many of the services and functions of the traditional local authority. You will more and more commission services and hold those delivering them to account on behalf of your residents. And just as you rose to the challenge in social care where most services are now contracted out to the private and voluntary sectors, you will I am sure do so again.

I am delighted to hear from some of the Councils present about the work already underway to do things differently, rising to the challenge of localism in an era of austerity:

- the SE7 Group of authorities which is driving reform in several high-cost service areas, for example looking afresh at waste as a valuable resource rather than a costly problem;
- Essex’s Social Impact Bond to attract significant new investment to target young people on the edge of care or custody, with repayment derived from future service savings;
- East Sussex’s initiative in bringing higher education to Hastings to raise expectations and fuel regeneration;
- Kent’s continuing efforts to support young people into apprenticeships, cutting the red tape for employers; and its Health Commission pressing for change to enable people to stay and be cared for in their own homes and communities rather than to languish in hospital beds; and
- The Tri-council arrangement between Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham to commission better services together across the boroughs and thereby to reduce costs.

To this we must add the robust financial management of East Sussex, Kent, Essex and others spending wisely now, having previously saved for rainy (or snowy) days ahead.

Local leadership in a perfect storm

As I have said, I believe there is a perfect storm:

- An economy needing a significant boost;
- Reduced funding for many public services accelerating the need for change; and
- New reforms from Government which cry out for local leadership if they are to deliver.

Nor are you alone in this storm. We must remember that local democracy is becoming a competitive business. Next month Police & Crime Commissioners will be a further welcome addition to City Mayors and strengthened Parishes and Communities.

I am arguing tonight that this perfect storm offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for local government. But councils must define their role by action not by right. At this stage I am going to submit to the temptation to refer to Boris. Not to promote a Thames Estuary Airport many of you will be pleased to hear. And not to say that everything Boris has done is without fault. But he has taken the limited powers of the GLA, piled them on top of each other and stood upon them to rise up and become a champion for London in a way not seen for generations. To be fair Ken Livingstone had stood up for Londoners too, but in Boris we have seen the relentless promotion of London as a global economic centre.

Boris has taken the message far and wide to encourage new investment and jobs, while every opportunity at the Olympics was taken to make London feel good about itself. The capital has looked beyond its boundaries, has spoken as one and has got things done at pace.

And the result: while Sandy was once dubbed by the Guardian as the most powerful Tory in the land, who can tell me the last local government leader who was referred to in the press as the Prime Minister in waiting? Though I don't want you to take that as a personal endorsement! So the opportunity for local leadership is there for the taking.

“This perfect storm offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for local government”

A new brand of leadership

In defining this new leadership, I would argue it has two strands: economic and civic – national imperatives at a local level. Local opportunity – national benefit.

“You can be the local driver for growth and jobs”

Of these, Economic leadership is now the most critical. Many of you already see this as perhaps the most important thing you can do. You can be the local driver for growth and jobs. Local councils have a pivotal role to play in promoting place and establishing an environment conducive to business.

Who should know the companies on their doorsteps best? Who controls planning? Who has the scale to stimulate new investment and growth? Who, as Sandy used to say, is best placed to join up locally? You will all be different, but the opportunities are myriad:

Inward investment, doing a Boris to show you are open for business, that you can make an inward investor welcome and you can help negotiate them through the maze of government schemes, reliefs and local issues; I would also add tourism promotion, perhaps the most defining example of place and identity marketing.

Spatial planning to co-ordinate and deliver infrastructure, working innovatively with the private sector to deliver in new and exciting ways, looking ahead to new business needs, showing purpose and vision. I am looking here at new areas of growth and investment in terms of digital networks, energy generation and smart grids, the green economy and major retrofit programmes delivered with private investment to save residents money.

Delivering the housing required using the new planning arrangements. This will require a new kind of leadership and the Government will be looking to ensure that the slim-line National Planning Policy Framework really works. Despite the landbanks, many businesses still say that planning is one of the biggest local obstacles to their development and growth.

Joining up and simplifying access to business support. The Government has many programmes out there, but do those who could truly benefit know about these opportunities. Is there a case for simplification and joining up locally?

Establishing a more entrepreneurial culture. Even with the introduction of free schools and academies, your relationship with the education sector – schools, FE colleges, universities – is unique.

Despite their glossy brochures, many universities are simply not business-minded – how can you further help encourage student and academic spin outs and the transfer of technology from the lab to the factory.

Bringing together investment projects of a sufficient scale to make them attractive to private and institutional investors and brokering deals with them to deliver.

Growing the rural economy. With issues of food security growing and our food imports at historically high levels, how are we encouraging innovation and looking again at food and agriculture as a growth sector. For those choosing not to travel, what is it like to be a home-worker in your area?

And you may also need to be reactive and deal with economic shocks. Kent's work to support the sale of the Discovery Park site, working across public and private sectors, is perhaps a prime example of this.

Civic leadership links closely to this. Like Sandy, I define it as standing up for the interests of your residents. It's not just a press release here and a newspaper story there. It's a cultural change in many ways. You will know you are doing it when your residents look to you as a matter of course.

One example of this would be rail services. You have little formal power as councils, but what you can do is articulate the view of your residents in a much more powerful way than they can do alone, particularly as new franchises come up for renewal. And the beauty is that you don't need all the answers. It is for the rail operators to address your concerns and satisfy you with their solutions. But your support counts and you should use this leverage to the full.

**“Your support counts
and you should use this
leverage to the full”**

There are other areas too where you can articulate demand, of which at the moment, Broadband is by far the most prominent. Where a business case can be shown, business will fulfil the need. Where it doesn't, it is up to you to help champion and prioritise through the admittedly rather tortuous public sector route, as many of you are doing.

And your services are changing to reflect new demands while, as councils, you are increasingly commissioning these services and not delivering them yourselves. Taken to extremes, how do you change your role in the public eye from apologist if things go wrong in a

service you deliver, to community champion - acting on behalf of your residents - to ensure that somebody else is delivering them right.

Let's not forget the Big Society either. As Chairman of Help the Hospices, I see for myself on every hospice visit just what vital work is being done by the voluntary sector. The love, the care and the support given in attending to the needs of the person as a whole. In some cases this may actually extend the life that someone has; in others making the last days of that life worth living. Hospices are a wonderful example, but what more can you do as civic leaders to create the conditions for charities, voluntary organisations and volunteers to thrive?

And then there is your "place". What defines you – are you rural, urban, suburban, a mixture of all three? Are you a manufacturing economy or a commuter economy? Many of you will be mixtures of each, but how do you relay, relate and promote the interests of the people you represent?

Conclusion: Inspire a generation

These ideas are, of course, not definitive. The beauty is that the challenges for council X may not be the challenges for council Y. Nor should they be.

The Economist last month spoke of "political petri dishes" and the flourishing of "bottom-up localism". It looked to Barnet's "Easycouncil" and the Tri-boroughs at one end of the political spectrum and Islington's "Fairness Commission" and Lambeth's "Co-operative Council" at the other. Where Wandsworth's pioneering privatisation helped transform the national economy of the 1980s, it calls for the "accidental revolution" in local government today to spread.

The joy of it is that you don't have to don't wait to be told or wait for permission. Local government has entered a new and exciting phase and you are the Leaders who can redefine local democracy and local leadership by what you do.

"Local government has entered a new and exciting phase and you are the Leaders who can redefine local democracy and local leadership by what you do"

The Olympics and Paralympics inspired a new generation of athletes. By your leadership at a local level, by reinvigorating the role of the local councillor and by exciting the leaders of tomorrow, you too can inspire a generation – the very generation winning the Bruce-Lockhart scholarships.

I pause briefly at this stage before finishing to repeat a memory Eric Pickles relayed of Sandy in presenting the Bruce-Lockhart Member Scholarship to Shona earlier this year.

Eric said that Sandy would come and see him about an issue on which they at first disagreed. However, almost without realising it, by the end of the conversation he would not only agree with Sandy's proposition he would be convinced it was his idea in the first place!

I am very happy to think that everything I've said this evening is already in your minds. I am sure much of it was. What I have tried to deliver is a practical and pragmatic account of where the opportunities currently lie.

So we have a national economy in need of a significant boost. We have reduced public service funding accelerating the need for change. And we have reforms from Government which cry out for local leadership if they are to deliver what they intend.

The wave of the perfect storm has formed. It is up to you to ride it. Your local opportunity can indeed bring significant national benefit and I am sure you will rise to the challenge.

The Bruce-Lockhart scholar 2011/12

Paul Knight



Now, more than ever, we need strong leadership. The challenges we face in national and local government are unprecedented, and if we are to meet these challenges competent leadership will not be enough. We need inspirational leaders.

Using the Bruce Lockhart Scholarship I set out to understand the difference between good leaders and exceptional leaders. I divided my scholarship into three themes.

Learning from the best – Keen to further develop my own leadership skills, I attended the empowering leadership programme at Ashridge. Over a six month period I had the opportunity to reflect upon my leadership style and better understand the different styles adopted by others. My time at Ashridge allowed me to think about the type of leader I am now and the type of leader I want to become.

Seeing is believing – My scholarship took me to the USA to see inspirational leadership first hand and to explore the innovative use of new technologies to effectively engage with citizens. At Cambridge I met the longest serving city manager in the country. We talked about the common challenges we face and the type of leader needed to meet these challenges head on.

At Boston I met with the Department for Innovation and Technology (Do-It)! We shared ideas about digital engagement and discussed the power of embracing new and open technology. I was particularly keen to explore how new technology can help us connect with our communities and build civic participation. A great example of this was the adoptahydrant.org site, a simple idea asking citizens to take responsibility for shovelling snow away from fire hydrants in the winter.

Making it real – At the outset of the scholarship I wanted to ensure that I used some of the funding to make a positive difference to the people I serve in South Cambridgeshire. Inspired by my experiences at Ashridge and the USA, I worked with the public to develop a two way information sharing mapping service. Using a

simple Google Map we plotted valuable community information across South Cambridgeshire and also empowered citizens to share their own data. The service embraces open technology, is low cost and completely scalable. Launching in November 2012 we look forward to watching the community take ownership of the mapping and begin to shape the information within it.

So what helps make an exceptional leader? Whilst there is no magic formula, common amongst those I met during my scholarship was passion, ambition (both as an individual and for their organisation), creativity, and a strong sense of urgency. These have become my personal values which I will take with me into the future.

In addition I learnt that exceptional leaders have mastered the art of getting things done. They understand the value of relationships and influence. They enthuse others with positivity and empower them to make a difference. These leaders are resilient to those who say 'it can't be done' and keep things moving forward by keeping things simple.

The Bruce Lockhart Scholarship was a once in a career opportunity. I will take with me the experiences and learning, and look back on the last year as one of the most significant in my career and my life so far.

The Local Government Challenge

Part learning opportunity, part TV series, the Local Government Challenge sets the standard for seeking out the best and brightest talent in local government.

Ten contestants take part in five tough challenges which reflect local, national and global issues of political and public relevance, and test each candidate's creative, communication and leadership skills. Contestants are observed every step of the way by TV cameras and must present their ideas and proposals to a panel of leading local government figures and partner organisations.

The winner of the 2012 LG Challenge, Hannah Rees, was awarded a career enhancing scholarship worth up to £10,000 from the Bruce-Lockhart Leadership Programme. The Local Government Challenge is open to anyone who works for a member authority of the LGA. It doesn't matter what level they are currently at – the aim of the competition is to seek out those with the drive and determination to reach the top.

‘Creative Disruption’



Kent, East Sussex and Essex County Council Leaders Paul Carter, Peter Jones and Peter Martin respond to Lord Howard’s Bruce-Lockhart Lecture.

Whether it’s a “perfect storm” or a disruptive influence, there’s no doubt that 30% less funding is encouraging local government to innovate and transform! Lord Howard sets out a challenge in his lecture and we believe local government has responded.

The age of austerity has taken us on a journey of innovation and transformation but local government across the country has risen to the challenge.

In health, the best councils are already beginning to break down the monopolistic barriers they face, helping money to be spent better and caring for people in their own homes and communities if that’s where they want to be.

Through the new Troubled Families programme, councils are bringing local agencies together and tackling deep-rooted social problems in a completely different way.

While in our national drive for growth, many councils are blazing the way in creating an economy conducive to supporting new local business and jobs.

But it can never be a “them and us”. The biggest achievements will come from national and local government working seamlessly together, for example Kent CC’s success with Discovery Park in East Kent. Together with regeneration company Sea Change, East Sussex

CC and partners are using grant funding and their own money to expand higher education and business park facilities in Hastings. Finally, Essex CC are working with businesses and training providers to make sure young people have the skills businesses need to grow the economy - there's plenty of innovation going on.

Local government needs still closer relations with Government and Ministers, learning from each other and coming through challenging times together.

In an age of austerity, we are stronger side by side.

The Bruce-Lockhart Leadership Programme

The Bruce-Lockhart Leadership Programme was launched to support the next generation of local government leaders and officers. Sandy Bruce-Lockhart - Lord Bruce-Lockhart of the Weald - was an inspiration for many of the present generation of local and national leaders. Through the Bruce-Lockhart Leadership Programme, we intend to ensure he is an inspiration for the next.

Funded primarily by Kent, Essex and East Sussex County Councils, the programme offers scholarships to study best practice nationally and internationally, both to develop the individual and to apply and share learning to advance local government and localism in the UK. In recognising and rewarding leadership potential in local government, these are available to Members through the Cllr of the Year Awards and to promising young local government officers through the LGA's Local Government Challenge. Feedback from the scholarships is given at the annual Bruce-Lockhart Lecture.

