

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Improvement and Innovation
Date: Thursday 19 September 2013
Venue: Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council / Representing
Chairman	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Deputy-Chair	Claire Kober	Haringey LB
Deputy-Chair	Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
Members	Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire CC
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Tony Jackson	Bexley LB
	Glen Miller	Bradford City
	David Mackintosh	Northumberland Council
	Paul Middlebrough	Wychavon DC
	Tony McDermott MBE	Fenland District Council
	Tim Cheetham	Halton BC
	Imran Hussain	Bradford City
	Kate Hollern	Barnsley MBC
	Sue Woodward	Staffordshire CC
	Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames
	John Blackie	Richmondshire DC and North Yorkshire CC
	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
Apologies	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
	Shirley Flint	North Kesteven DC
Observers/Other attendees	Cllr Howard Sykes	LGA Liberal Democrat National Lead Peer
	Cllr Paul Bettison	LGA Conservative National Lead Peer
	Cllr Michael White	LGA Conservative Regional Lead Peer
	Philip Sellwood	Energy Savings Trust
	Richard Priestman	Lombard
LGA Officers	Michael Coughlin, Dennis Skinner, Verity Sinclair, Juliet Whitworth, Pascoe Sawyers, Stephen Jacobs	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed everybody to the first Improvement and Innovation Board meeting of the new cycle and asked for thanks to be recorded to all retiring members and substitutes.</p> <p>Cllr Richard Stay declared an interest in Item 6 as a trustee of the Leadership Centre.</p>	
2	<p>Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Bodies</p> <p>The board noted the membership and the terms of reference. They then discussed the outside bodies' vacancies.</p> <p><u>Decisions</u></p> <p>That the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Noted the membership and agreed the revised terms of reference.ii. Agreed that Cllr Tony McDermott would be the representative on the Urban Commission Steering Committee, Cllr Paul Middlebrough would be the representative on the Rural Commission and Cllr Tim Cheetham would be the representative on the Knowledge Navigator steering group <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Officers to take forward in line with members recommendations.</p>	<p>Verity Sinclair</p>
3	<p>Priorities and Work Programme for 2013/14</p> <p>Michael Coughlin gave a presentation on the LGA's Rewiring Public Services campaign, outlining the key priorities and how these would be achieved.</p> <p>Cllr Peter Fleming then gave a presentation setting out his personal perspective on Improvement and Innovation. The presentation touched on a number of issues including the financial landscape, the focus on innovation and prevention, the support the LGA currently provides, and the importance of working with outside partners, working with other councils and making sure all LGA boards had</p>	

improvement at their heart.

The discussion was then opened up to the rest of the board.

Members queried how the IIB's joint working with other boards operated in practice. Cllr Fleming explained the board's relationship with other areas, using CYP as a key example of good links. He felt that these relationships would grow stronger in future.

Some members raised the importance of IT provision in facilitating improvement and were assured that this was addressed within the work on procurement and productivity. The importance of transparency and good communication was also highlighted along with the potential need of some councils for specific support to deal with their current financial challenges.

The importance of encouraging councils to make the most of government initiatives was mentioned as well as being ambitious in their plans, not purely managing decline. The importance of joint working with other bodies such as Health and the Police and Crime Commissioners' was raised as a necessity with the limited funds currently available in local government.

Members noted that the end of year report had included references to future priorities and felt that it would be helpful to see a forward timetable of activity in each of the Board's five strategic themes.

After the discussion Cllr Fleming invited members to think about their preferences for the year, and explained a list would be put together and brought to the next board meeting.

There was a brief discussion on sector led improvement and the importance of continuing to engage the sector in this work. The possibility of a board away day at another council to discuss this was mentioned.

Decisions

That the Board:

- i. Agreed the priorities for the year.
- ii. **Agreed** members to be invited to put forward their preferences for the coming year.

Actions

Officers to take forward in line with members' recommendations, including developing a forward looking plan of key activities over the coming year, to be submitted to the board.

Michael Coughlin /
Dennis Skinner

Officers to invite member preferences and bring this to the next board.

Verity Sinclair

Innovation Programme Update

4. The Board received a report on the Innovation programme noting in particular the progress on Creative Councils (which would come to an end in November), the success of the Innovation Zone at conference and the development of a Local Councils Innovation Framework, including the launch of "Council Leaders': key actions for Innovation".

Cllr Peter Fleming thanked Joan Munro for her work on the Innovation Framework.

There was a brief discussion on the Innovation opportunities for the year ahead, with Cllr Fleming saying he had met with the Design Council, the Young Foundation and the NSPCC to discuss ideas. Other members mentioned the importance of engaging national government through working with peers, the treasury, BIS and CLG.

Decision

That the Board:

Noted the progress made and on-going work of the Innovation programme;

Action

Bring forward a refreshed work programme for consideration at a future meeting.

Dennis Skinner

5. Update on LG Inform

Juliet Whitworth (Research and Information Manager) presented the report to the board. She explained that the soft launch to registered users had been a success with 3443 visits with an average duration of 15 minutes 13 seconds. As of 18 September the system had been launched to all leaders and chief executives and would be launched to the public at the end of November. Over the coming months the team would be working on communication with a double page spread in first magazine and speaking to councils directly.

A discussion with members followed with many welcoming the new system and agreeing that it would help with comparability and transparency.

Concerns were raised about how up to date the information was and whether the public would be willing to use the system.

Juliet explained that the data contained within LG Inform was the most up-to-date public validated data. This could only be improved if Government validated the data more quickly. LG Inform enabled councils to upload unvalidated data to get earlier comparisons and to create metrics which were more useful at local level. Regarding public usage, Juliet explained the hope was that councils would embed pages from the system into their own websites, meaning the public would be able to see the data without having to access the LG Inform site. This would also be very helpful to councils as they could write explanations of the data on the page.

Decisions

That the Board:

- i. **Noted** the launch of the new version of LG Inform and associated communications work.
- ii. **Noted** the timing of the launch to the public.

Action

Officers to take forward in line with members' recommendations.

Juliet Whitworth

6. Revising the Leadership Offer

Cllr Richard Stay introduced the report and thanked the Member Panel and officers for all of the work that had gone into pulling it together.

Cllr Stay went through the details of the new offer explaining that there would be a greater focus on outcomes and future proofing. There had been a number of views and objectives put forward but the work had been guided by the following principles: a focus on political leadership, better targeting, increased cohesion, flexibility, better evaluation, updated content and cost recovery. Cllr Stay outlined the proposed new programmes and stressed the importance of getting people from a broader range of backgrounds and occupations into leadership roles and having a well-rounded package of support.

There was a wide discussion with members on the new programme, with the majority being broadly supportive. The increased influence of political groups in choosing participants was praised and a stronger focus on sustaining/embedding learning through appropriate "follow

up” activity along with a greater emphasis on evaluation, showing where councillors ended up after the training, were encouraged. There was also mention of professional development being a necessity to encourage younger councillors.

Members did raise concerns about some of the detailed wording, asking for the reference to “senior” councillors to be removed to make sure new councillors were not being prejudiced against. It was also noted that, shadow leaders and opposition portfolio holders were also engaged in “leadership” and should not be excluded from future programmes. Other concerns including the need for training in working with outside partners were mentioned.

It was confirmed that the proposals included rebranding the current leadership offer.

Decisions

That the Board:

- i. Agreed the draft Leadership offer proposals including the stronger role for political groups be agreed and recommended to the Leadership Board
- ii. Agreed the leadership working group would be reformed to give further consideration to programme follow-up and evaluation.

Action

Officers to take forward in line with members recommendations.

Michael Coughlin

7. Productivity Programme Update

Dennis Skinner updated the board on the Productivity programme, including the economic growth advisors and explained they were currently assessing the bids. He also discussed the potential work programme around monetising waste which could see the productivity team looking to fund a contract renegotiation expert with a few councils and sharing the savings achieved.

Decision

That the board:

Noted the progress made and the on-going work of the Productivity programme;

Agreed: the proposal to “soft market test” the proposal for a contract

renegotiation expert on waste recycles with the results being reported to the board.

Action

Officers to take forward in line with members recommendations.

Craig Egglestone /
Dennis Skinner

Note of the last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 7 November 2013