

LGA Business Plan 2013/14

Purpose of report

For discussion and agreement.

Summary

At the last meeting the Board agreed the 5 strategic themes for the coming year. This report provides further details about the key activities under each theme; the improvement activity currently underway across other LGA Boards and invites the Board to contribute to the LGA's Business Planning process for 2014/15.

Recommendations

That the Board:

1. discusses and confirms the key activities for the Board's work programme for the 2013/14 meeting cycle.
2. notes the improvement activity being undertaken by other LGA Boards
3. contributes to the development of the LGA's Business Plan for 14/15.

Action

Officers to progress the Board's agreed priorities and activities in the light of members' views, reporting regularly to the Board.

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Priorities and Work Programme for 2013/14

Background

1. At the last meeting the Board considered its proposed priorities and work for 13/14 in the light of the LGA Business Plan and the LGA's *Rewiring Public Services* work.

2. The LGA Business Plan indicates that:

*At the heart of all this work, are our core services to councils which are driven by our belief in **sector-led improvement**. Supporting local government as the most efficient and accountable part of the public sector, the LGA will play a leading role in improvement and innovation so that councils can continue to make a difference in their local areas and to the lives of their residents.*

3. The Business Plan also reaffirms the LGA's role in maintaining an overview of performance and sets out our approach to supporting councils and the LGA's role in providing and coordinating the necessary tools to support councils.

4. Based on the Business Plan priorities, the *Rewiring Public Services* work, and previous discussions around the end of year report, the Board agreed that its work programme for the coming year should continue to be focused on the following 5 strategic themes:

4.1 Sector Led Improvement

4.2 Productivity

4.3 Innovation

4.4 Leadership

4.5 Transparency.

5. The Board asked for a further report setting out the key activities and milestones under each of the key strategic themes and these are set out for members' consideration below and at **Appendix A** attached.

5.1 Sector Led Improvement, including Audit

5.1.1 Continuing to promote and deliver the LGA's core "offer" to support councils in making the most of their approach to sector led improvement: this includes corporate peer challenge.

5.1.2 Developing new offers in response to changing circumstances and demand: e.g. the new finance offer; development of the new Health and Well-being Board Peer Challenge which are going down well (six have been completed so far: E Riding, W Sussex, Bristol, Sefton, Merton, and Coventry).

5.1.3 Supporting individual councils and groups of councils where they may be facing performance challenges.

5.1.4 Contributing to the improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards.

5.1.5 On-going evaluation of the impact of sector led improvement with the final results to be reported to the Board in the New Year. This work will contribute to future top slice discussions and help shape our future sector led improvement offer.

Item 3

- 5.1.6 Local Audit and Accountability Bill: further lobbying on the Bill in order to secure an amendment to enable a sector led approach to procurement; develop proposals for a sector led commissioning offer; and explore potential legacy issues with the Audit Commission e.g. the value for money profiles and other tools.

5.2 Productivity

- 5.2.1 Continue to deliver the Productivity programme agreed by the Board. The programme is focussed around four key themes

- 5.2.1.1 Children, adults and families
- 5.2.1.2 Procurement, capital and assets, economic growth
- 5.2.1.3 Waste, energy and other commissioning
- 5.2.1.4 Future ways of working.

- 5.2.2 A full report updating the Board on the progress being made in the Productivity Programme, and setting out activity plans for work in 2014/15 is elsewhere on the agenda.

5.3 Innovation

- 5.3.1 Working with NESTA to extract and promote the learning from the Creative Councils programme which draws to a close in November 2013 – this will include a repeat of the successful “Innovation Zone” at the LGA’s Annual Conference in 2014.
- 5.3.2 Developing a revised work programme on “Innovation” to be submitted to a future meeting of the Improvement and Innovation Board.

5.4 Leadership

- 5.4.1 Draw to a close the current programme of leadership development programmes and activity.
- 5.4.2 Launch the new leadership programme; manage a successful transition to the new programme and undertake further marketing and promotion.
- 5.4.3 Continuing to run the successful National Graduate development programme with marketing for the Cohort 16 intake (2014) this Autumn.

5.5 Transparency

- 5.5.1 Make LG Inform available to the public on 29 November 2013; make LG Inform Plus ward profiles available to councils; and work with councils to deliver more up-to-date data comparisons as part of an LG Inform ‘benchmarking club.’
- 5.5.2 Continue to promote the use of LG Inform and LG Inform Plus within councils, both corporately and with residents and continue to improve and develop LG Inform and LG Inform Plus in the light of feedback to support authorities.

Item 3

- 5.5.3 Manage £1 million of Breakthrough Fund programme to support authorities in releasing open data.
- 5.5.4 Promote a greater understanding of and good practice in publishing local open data and data standards, encouraging uses in business and community and within authorities.
- 5.5.5 Support a local information infrastructure as an enabler for combining and comparing local data and information to make it more meaningful and useful.
- 5.5.6 Lobby for key government transparency policies to take account of local authorities' and communities' interests.

Board – Ways of Working

- 6. At the last meeting it was agreed to invite members to express preferences about those areas of the Board's activities that they would like to get more involved with. This allows the creation of a pool of interested councillors from varying political groups under each strategic theme. The nature of members' involvement will depend on the pattern of work in each area. From each pool the Board also currently appoints a lead member or "portfolio holder" for each area. The "Portfolio holders" have a variety of roles, all of which are an extension of the role of members of the board. They might include: representing the Board at external and LGA events (speaking on behalf of the LGA and whole Board, not their political group); engaging at a national level with key stakeholders, contributing to the planning and presentation of items within their portfolio to the Board, etc. At the time of finalising this report a number of requests were still outstanding but it should be possible to finalise the allocations shortly.

LGA Board's Improvement work

- 7. The Improvement and Innovation Board has a specific remit providing an overarching framework for the sector's work on sector led improvement and a strategic oversight of the improvement activity and support provided by other LGA Boards. This is reflected in the Improvement and Innovation Board's terms of reference agreed at the last meeting.
- 8. Further details of the improvement activity being undertaken by LGA Boards is attached at **Appendix B**.

Business Planning for 14/15

- 9. At its meeting on 23 October the LGA Leadership Board considered an approach to developing next years business plan. It recognised that the high level priorities identified for 2013/14 are still broadly relevant for 2014/15 and that there is value in having a settled set of priorities for the organisation, particularly at this stage in the political cycle.
- 10. However, over the last year the LGA has also developed a stronger narrative about our vision for local government as set out in the Rewiring Public Services work, and this work now needs to be played into the business planning process for 2014/15. The Leadership Board has therefore agreed **Appendix C** attached as an initial Business Plan proposition for discussion.

11. The Improvement and Innovation Board is invited to comment on and contribute to this initial proposition in advance of further consideration by the Leadership Board in January.

Next Steps

12. Members are asked to discuss and confirm the activities under each of the five strategic themes set out above. Progress will be reported regularly to the Board and, as the body with responsibility for holding all Boards to account, every quarter the LGA Executive will also receive an overview of all Board's work programmes and progress.

Financial Implications

13. While there are no additional financial implications or costs arising as a result of this report, it should be noted that much of the work set out is funded by RSG 'topslice' which, as Members will be aware has been reduced in 2013/14.