

## Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

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**Title:** Improvement & Innovation Board  
**Date:** Tuesday 11 July 2017  
**Venue:** 5th Floor Conference Suite, 5th Floor (South side), Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street,. London, EC1M 5LG

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

### Item Decisions and actions

#### 1 Declarations of Interest

Councillor William Nunn (Chairman) welcomed members to the meeting and requested members make any declarations necessary.

Councillor Alan Connett declared an interest in Item 6 as a co-deliverer of Leadership Academy.

#### 2 Note of the Previous Meeting

Councillor Nunn asked the board to note and agree the note of the previous meeting.

##### Decision

The board **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### 3 Productivity Programme

##### Behavioural Insights

Rhian Gladman (Programme Manager – Productivity) introduced Tim Pearse (Head of Local Government at the Behavioural Insights Team) who gave a presentation on the Behavioural Insights Team's work with the LGA and pilot councils using nudge techniques to influence service demand.

Tim Pearse outlined the basic principle of Behavioural Insights around encouraging the public to replace instinctual automatic decision-making with more deliberative decision-making practices and thereby encourage them to make the desired for choice. He outlined three trials currently underway in Leeds, Lincolnshire and Liverpool around adult social care signposting, skills training and sugar consumption in hospitals respectively. The reports are expected shortly with phase 2 trials in Brighton and Hove, Kent, Lambeth and Southwark and Tunbridge Wells, Swale, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone.

## **Discussion**

Members discussed:

- 1) The modelling used to assess the success of these trials and how to assess whether value for money was achieved.
- 2) The viability of 'nudge' theory in the digital sector and the need for the online option to be as good as, if not better than, the non-online option.
- 3) The opportunity to make some quick wins by sharing good practice around simple nudges ie letter wording already proven by experience to be effective.

## **Action**

Officers to explore with BIT how we can promote simple and effective 'nudges' for councils to adopt.

## Productivity Report

Councillor Ron Woodley introduced the productivity report including successes for this last year and priorities for the 2017/18 political cycle. He particularly highlighted the re-launch of the Shared Services Map which went live a few days prior to the meeting showing substantial savings up to £643 million since 2012; the re-launch of the Enterprising Councils guidance; two successful workshops around digitisation (transformation and cyber security) at the LGA Annual Conference; the successful Conference Innovation Zone and a further 18% reduction in audit fees as negotiated by PSAA.

## **Discussion**

Members discussed:

- 1) Whether the savings shown in the Shared Services Map are increasing, decreasing or remaining static on a year on year basis and requested this be noted for future reports.
- 2) Whether the LGA is doing enough around cyber security considering the recent NHS cyber-attack. Officers reassured members that local government was protected during this attack because security systems are more up-to-date and compliant than other groups. However this was an issue of growing importance and the LGA was working through the Cyber Security Stakeholder group to raise the profile of the issue at senior levels within councils.
- 3) Whether the three categories used as a framework for this work (transforming services, smarter sourcing and generating income) are still appropriate for guiding the LGA's future activity in this area.
- 4) Reported concern in the Treasury around councils buying high value development sites using the public works loan board and the possible danger of large borrowing if the property market crashes. Members highlighted the potential need to help councils invest and identified the potential need for communications support to help councils explain to their residents the drivers behind commercial activity and how this can mitigate against the pressure to raise council tax levels.
- 5) The importance of promoting the positive outcomes identified in the report to councils and ensuring that opportunities to participate in the work, eg as pilots, are widely promoted.

## **Decisions**

Members noted the updates and progress on the Productivity Programme and provided guidance around the direction of the programme and detail in the report.

## **Actions**

Officers to:

- 1) Include in future reports, details as to the year on year increases or decreases of savings demonstrated in the Shared Service Map.
- 2) Review whether the three categories used as a framework for the productivity programme are still appropriate for guiding the LGA's future activity in this area.

Consider members' suggestions for further support to help councils pursue the commercialisation agenda.

## **4 Performance Report and MOU for 2017/18**

Dennis Skinner (Head of Improvement) introduced the report on performance against the deliverables identified in the 2016/17 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DCLG on sector led improvement. Forty-eight out of 50 deliverables had been achieved; the two outstanding ones were around fraud workshops delivered by CIPFA, which would now take place in 2017/18, and the uptake of the National Graduate Development Program (NGDP).

Dennis pointed to the positive outcomes in para 2.6 of the report, in particular that a basket of performance metrics used by councils continued to improve, levels of resident satisfaction had been maintained and that ninety per cent of council leaders and chief executives surveyed believed the LGA's support had had a positive impact on their authority.

In terms of 2017/18, DCLG had approved a grant of £21m and an updated MoU had been agreed.

## **Discussion**

Members discussed:

- 1) The uptake of Corporate Peer Challenges (CPC). It was noted that half the CPCs delivered in 2016/17 were to "first time" councils;
- 2) Whether we could also take the views of Opposition Leaders on the LGA's support offer;
- 3) Whilst public satisfaction had been maintained it was not yet at a level that many in the private sector would be comfortable with and whether there was more the LGA could do in this area, recognising the difficulties and challenges of working in the public sphere where much was delivered through partnership;
- 4) The requirement within the MoU to help the sector achieve £210 million of savings, ongoing monitoring of these savings and consequences if they are not achieved.

## Decision

Members:

- 1) **Noted** the report and the MoU for 2017/18
- 2) **Agreed** the report on sector-led improvement in 2016/17 for publishing.

## Action

Officers: to augment the SLI report for 2016/17 and future productivity programme reports to the Board with a table showing projected savings.

## 5 Improvement support to councils around community cohesion, counter extremism and Prevent

Mark Norris (Principal Policy Adviser) introduced this item about improvement support for councils around community cohesion, counter-terrorism and Prevent in the light of Dame Louise Casey's review report published in December 2016.

Mark reported that Dame Louise Casey attended the March LGA Executive and set out the challenges to local government around cohesion. A more detailed integration strategy from government has been delayed and is now not expected for some time. In terms of developing a support offer it was suggested that this be built on the existing support around community cohesion and Prevent and developed further with councils through informal round-table sessions. Feedback to date tended to suggest that councils would value opportunities to network and share good practice as opposed to further written guidance.

## Discussion

Members discussed:

- 1) The apparent lack of mention of the importance of educational opportunities in the context of cohesion, although Dame Casey did include a strand of work around economic opportunities;
- 2) That the Prevent agenda is viewed negatively by some;
- 3) Agreement that the approach taken is correct, and that the focus should be on the positives.

## Decisions

Members **noted** the contents of the report around improvement-related work already underway and **commented** on the work going forward in response to the Casey review.

## Actions

Officers:

- 1) To continue developing the cohesion programme.
- 2) To organise round-table events for councillors to help shape the LGA's support offer around the issue of community cohesion.

## **6 Highlighting Leadership offer: 2016/17 final outturn and 2017/18 work priorities**

Councillor Judi Billing introduced the item. In terms of the delivery of the 2016/17 leadership offer, the programme had attracted 649 participants, the second highest total in the last ten years, 95 percent said that attending the programmes had made them more confident in their leadership role and that the ethnicity balance had improved. However there had been a small decrease in gender equality and engagement from the north-east is not optimum.

Councillor Billing outlined the refreshed leadership offer for 2017/18 which had been developed in response to the new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This involved augmenting current programmes with an increased offer around managerial leadership in conjunction with SOLACE.

### **Discussion**

Members of the board discussed:

- 1) The level of engagement mentioned within the report as higher, despite fewer attendees. Officers explained this is due to individual members taking up multiple offers.
- 2) The question of why not all leadership programmes are full considering each council receives free places and whether more could be done to encourage authorities to take up these places.

### **Decision**

Members:

- 1) **Noted** the outturn figures for 2016/17.
- 2) **Agreed** the work plan for 2017/18.

## **7 Innovation Zone at LGA annual conference**

Councillor Peter Fleming introduced this item and thanked officers, particularly Vicki Goddard, and members, for the success of the Innovation Zone at the LGA Annual Conference. Publishing the programme early had allowed members to plan and prioritise events they wished to see and he requested that this be repeated for future conferences.

### **Decision**

Members agreed that the Innovation Zone had been very successful and made a significant contribution to the success of the Conference.

## **8 LGA Boards' improvement activity**

Vicki Goddard introduced the item.

### **Decision**

Members of the board noted the contents of the report.

## Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
Vice-Chairman	Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE	Bedford Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Judi Billing MBE Cllr Ron Woodley	North Hertfordshire District Council Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Members	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE Cllr Linda Robinson Cllr Harvey Siggs Cllr Barry Wood Cllr Bob Price Cllr Phil Davies Cllr Tudor Evans OBE Cllr Bob Jennings Sir Stephen Houghton CBE Cllr Mike Haines	Sevenoaks District Council Wychavon District Council Somerset County Council Cherwell District Council Oxford City Council Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Plymouth City Council Epping Forest District Council Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Teignbridge District Council
Apologies	Cllr Robert Gould Cllr Michael Wilcox Cllr Andy Moorhead Cllr Sue Woodward Cllr Cherry Beath Cllr Glen Sanderson JP	Dorset County Council Lichfield District Council Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Staffordshire County Council Bath & North East Somerset Council Northumberland Council
In Attendance	Mr Richard Priestman  Mr Philip Sellwood Tim Pearse	Local Government Improvement and Development Energy Saving Trust (EST) Head of Local Government, Behavioural Insights Team
LGA Officers	Dennis Skinner Alan Finch Mark Norris  William Brookes  Vicki Goddard Jess Norman	Head of Improvement Principal Adviser (Finance), Productivity Principal Policy Adviser, Resilience, Safety and Regulation Principal Adviser (Leadership, Leadership and Localism Improvement Support Adviser Members Services Officer