

Improvement Programme Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman)

1. The Improvement Board agreed at its September meeting that reports to the Board would hereon focus on **five priority areas**. The Board also agreed that all Board Members will actively be involved in leading on and shaping each of these priority areas.
2. The five priority areas are:
 - 2.1 Productivity - Shaping the LGG's productivity programme in order to ensure the programme helps councils achieve savings and provides a mechanism for bringing councils together to share innovation and learn from each other;
 - 2.2 Transparency - Influencing the transparency and open data agenda in a way that helps councils strengthen local accountability and also reduces the burden of data reporting to Government
 - 2.3 Improvement - Implementing Taking the Lead - in particular effective delivery of the LGG seven point support offer; ensuring effective arrangements are in place to monitor the risk of underperformance; putting in place arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of Taking the Lead;
 - 2.4 Innovation - working with stakeholders and councils to develop; share and promote innovative practice in the sector;
 - 2.5 Leadership - Shaping the LGG's Leadership programmes to ensure that the sector is supported to provide effective leadership to councils and communities.
3. The National Fraud Authority (NFA) gave a presentation to the Improvement Board in September on the proposed **Local Government Fraud Strategy – Fighting Fraud Locally**. Cllr Jill Shortland, the Board's Vice Chair, has since been working closely with the NFA on the draft strategy.
4. The strategy recognises the good work that Councils have done on tackling fraud locally and recognises that Government needs to do more to help Councils fight fraud, for example by sharing information and removing perverse barriers. A draft of the strategy will be presented to the November Board and launched in early December. This will be followed by a round of regional events to publicise the strategy, encourage take-up and share best practice.
5. Cllr Richard Stay chaired and introduced a session on the sector-led approach to self regulation at the **Taking the Lead roadshow in Cambridge** on 13 September. Cllr Stay set out Improvement East's approach to sector-self regulation and laid down the challenge of sector self regulation.

6. There was strong agreement during the session that Councils have a collective responsibility to protect the reputation of local government but that the approach to self-regulation should not seek to recreate the bureaucracies of the past. There was some concern about whether Councils had the mandate to intervene but an overall consensus that support should, and would, be given where requested.
7. The Creative Councils Innovation Programme's support package includes a programme of events, workshops and assistance to help the Councils deliver their vision. The first event, **The Creative Councils Camp**, was organised by NESTA and held in Birmingham between 12 and 14 September 2011.
8. Leaders and Chief Executives of the 17 selected Councils learnt about the support on offer to them and the potential to create and work in clusters of Councils from within the 17. This event was also an opportunity to gain further intelligence on the strongest ideas and extent to which Councils through to this round appear to have the necessary conditions in place to be successful at innovation. A Creative Councils group will be formed on the Knowledge Hub to facilitate the progress of clustering, capturing of information, enhancing the involvement of the LG sector and disseminating information to a wider audience.

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