

**Item 3e**

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

**New style “corporate” peer challenges**

1. We have completed the first tranche of new style “corporate” peer challenges and I have been impressed with the innovative ways some councils are using this resource. The feedback from those receiving and providing peer challenge has also been overwhelmingly positive – see the testimonials at [www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenges](http://www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenges). We are now in active discussions with around 100 councils to book their peer challenge slots for next year, so please make sure your authority books its slot soon. Email [andy.bates@local.gov.uk](mailto:andy.bates@local.gov.uk) or [paul.clarke2@local.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke2@local.gov.uk) to begin the process.

**Managing the risk of underperformance**

2. We are also making good progress to deliver councils' request that we develop some light touch arrangements to manage the risk of underperformance – and avoid the resulting reputational damage to the sector. Following discussions through the independent Advisory Board on self regulation and improvement our strengthened team of Principal Advisers will be the focal point for gathering intelligence about performance in their area and identifying councils facing performance challenges - so that the LGA is able to offer improvement support at the earliest possible stage. We have also had some very positive discussions with Government departments and the Inspectorates to explore how they can support this approach by sharing information with us and with the Children's Improvement Board to align approaches and activities.

**The future of local public audit**

3. We are expecting DCLG to publish its proposals for local public audit in early January. The paper will set out how DCLG propose to pursue the proposals in the light of the earlier consultation responses from the sector. We will be considering the proposals at the next meeting of the Improvement Programme Board on 17 January.

**Creative Councils**

4. We are continuing to work with NESTA on the promotion and development of council led innovation through the Creative Councils' initiative. Spring 2012 will see a series of events (Camps, Conferences and Events) to showcase, develop and seek the sector's and others' options on viability and replicability of the

ideas. Late April 2012 will see the selection of between 5-7 finalists. The finalists will receive additional resources and support.

### **Productivity**

5. The National Advisory Group for Procurement (NAGLGP) has held its inaugural meeting. The meeting agreed to take forward a number of actions on behalf of the Improvement Programme Board, including publishing a guide to EU procurement to dispel procurement myths and examine the impact of the Localism Bill on procurement initiatives that support the local economy.

### **Adult Society Care Efficiency Programme**

6. The Adult Society Care Efficiency Programme has been launched and gained significant attention from councils. The Department of Health agreed to match fund the LGA's £300,000 for this programme, allowing us to support up to 30 councils. 52 applications were received from a wide range of councils of all sizes and from all regions.

### **Children's Improvement Board - sector-led commissioning and productivity**

7. Working with funding from the Children's Improvement Board we have let a contract to deliver sector-led commissioning and productivity. The delivery partner will mobilise quickly in the new year and deliver our early priorities: identifying commissioning champions in the regions and working with the National Youth Association to support commissioning in youth services.

### **LG Inform**

8. Further improvements have been made to LG Inform prototype, the free online service that allows anyone in the sector to access, compare and analyse data, and present their findings. The improvements include increased speed, additional data, user guides, new reports on themes (such as waste and children's services), and the ability to export and print reports. There are now around 1,000 users from 285 different organisations. The procurement process for the next phase of LG Inform has just started, to develop LG Inform prototype according to the feedback from the sector that we have received.

### **Making Open Data Real**

9. The LGA has responded to the consultation on Making Open Data Real, endorsing the use of open data to make government more transparent and to foster localism, but arguing that transparency should be decided locally based on local needs and demands. The LGA continues to lobby to reduce the burden placed on local authorities to meet centrally driven prescription of technical requirements. However, we are also identifying and promoting emerging best practice of the opening up of data at local level – e.g the publication of spending data helps local authorities to procure their services more efficiently, while the location of public land and property joins up where public services are provided.

## **LGA shared services web resource and shared services map**

10. We have commissioned two pieces of research looking at shared services. The first, due to report at the end of January 2012, looks at why some shared services' experiences succeed and others do not. The second, due to report at the beginning of April, looks to assess whether the financial benefits to shared services have been realised. The LGA's shared services web resource and shared services map have been updated and revamped – demonstrating at least £160 million of savings to date and that district councils lead the way with shared services, particularly corporate and back-office services.

## **Food waste disposers**

11. We have launched a 12 month pilot project to find a council to trial the use of food waste disposers in residential kitchens and therefore take food waste out of the residual waste stream.

## **Wave 2 Capital Asset Pathfinders**

12. Analysis of the business cases has suggested that strong progress is being made by the pathfinders and most are on track to deliver savings of 20 per cent NPV and 25 per cent reduction in CO2. It is apparent that some of the pathfinders will require more support to do this and we are considering how best to achieve this.

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