

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

### **Improvement**

#### **LGA Annual Conference**

1. I was delighted by the comprehensive range of thought provoking workshops and fringe events relating to the work of the Improvement Board that took place over the three day LGA Annual Conference. Topics covered included: sector-led improvement, creative councils, leadership in local government, 'Be a councillor' campaign, future financial constraints on local government and much more. The number of delegates attending each session, as well as the lively and constructive debates reflects a high level of interest in the Board's work as well as appetite for practical advice in these areas.

#### **Sector-led improvement**

2. With sector-led improvement gathering momentum and the development of new approaches for children's and adult social services, more and more councils are beginning to use the support the LGA is providing. I am pleased to announce that we have developed a 'sector-led improvement in local government' publication ([www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement](http://www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement)) which brings this all together. The publication sets out a comprehensive and coordinated approach to sector-led improvement across local government, the support that is being provided for councils, and where to go for further information or advice.
3. As part of this work, I recently met with Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), to promote councils' take up of sector-led improvement and encourage the DCLG to continue to reinforce the principles of sector-led improvement with other Government departments and "head off" any future temptation to introduce new assessment processes. We also spoke about the forthcoming draft Audit Bill and I stressed the need to avoid any possibility of "mission creep" by the National Audit Office, for example the reintroduction a burdensome programme of local value for money studies.

### **Innovation**

#### **Creative Councils**

4. After so many months of hard work, I am thrilled to finally announce the decision of the Creative Councils Selection Panel, of which I was a part. Congratulations to Cornwall, Derbyshire, Monmouthshire, Rotherham, Stoke and Wigan Councils who have all been selected to move into the second phase of the 'Creative Councils' programme in recognition of their pioneering work in trialling radical new ways to deliver public services. For more information about the winning councils' proposals and phase 2 of the programme, please visit - [http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal\\_content/56/10171/3481319/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10171/3481319/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE).

## **Productivity**

### **Future Procurement Rules**

5. In conjunction with Councillor Wilcox, the European and International Board Chair, I sent a letter to all UK MEPs to secure their support ahead of a crucial vote on future procurement rules which will take place in the Autumn. The Brussels Office has worked with associations across Europe to develop a number of legislative amendments for our MEPs to table. The work aims to ensure simpler and more flexible procurement rules for councils under the new regime being introduced in June 2014.

### **Future Councils Programme**

6. At our most recent Lead Members' meeting, Councillors Shortland, Cadbury, Webb and I were pleased to endorse bids from Birmingham City Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council to become part of the Future Councils Programme. The programme, run in collaboration with Local Government Delivery Council, the District Council's Network and the participants of the recent Shared Chief Executives roundtable, identifies clusters of councils that are willing to work on new approaches to service delivery and provides practical, and where appropriate, financial support to them. I look forward to keeping you up to date as the programme progresses. If you would like further information about how your council could get involved please email [productivity@local.gov.uk](mailto:productivity@local.gov.uk).

## **Leadership**

### **Next Generation Programme**

7. I am pleased to inform you that following its launch at the LGA Annual Conference, the application process for the Next Generation Programme is now officially open! Next Generation is uniquely developed within party traditions and with party political experts, creating an unparalleled political development opportunity for participants. It enables them to rise to their own current and future political challenges. Now in its seventh year, Next Generation has the continued support of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour national leadership. It is aimed at committed councillors who have already demonstrated flair or a potential for leadership at a local level and have the capacity to develop politically. If you are interested in applying, please contact Charlotte Eisenhart at [charlotte.eisenhart@local.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.eisenhart@local.gov.uk) for further details.

## **Transparency**

### **LG Inform**

8. Work on the LGA's data service for councils is continuing well, with two key developments in the pipeline. We will shortly be launching a headline report tailored for district councils, so they can get more out of LG Inform and users will be able to create their own headline reports that feature their own local priorities. Secondly, development of the new version of LG Inform is well underway with the launch planned for later in the year. So watch this space!

**Contact officer:** Dennis Skinner  
**Position:** Head of Leadership and Productivity  
**Phone no:** 020 7664 3017  
**E-mail:** [dennis.skinner@local.gov.uk](mailto:dennis.skinner@local.gov.uk)