

Improvement Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman)

2012-13 Board

1. The new 18 member strong Improvement Board will meet for the first time on 17 September. As Chairman of the Board for the second year running, I am delighted to welcome a number of new Members as well as welcoming back existing members of the board. We have a challenging and exciting 12 months ahead of us. Improvement is at the heart of the Local Government Association's (LGA) key priorities for the year and the Board has a vital role to play in mainstreaming improvement throughout the LGA's activities. I am looking forward to keeping Councillors Forum up-to date through this monthly report on the Board's activities and contribution to the Business Plan.

Improvement

2. *Sector-led improvement* - I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to address the Councillors' Induction Day on 3 September and provide an overview of the LGA's improvement offer as well as share with colleagues the excellent improvement activities going on throughout much of the sector. We have recently launched a new publication which demonstrates that despite the continuing pressure on resources, councils are embracing sector-led improvement with real commitment. The publication - '[Sector-led improvement in practice: case studies](#)' - illustrates how councils are utilising the LGA's support offer to invest in political leadership; find new ways of engaging local people and communities; invite challenge from peers; share good practice and utilise comparative data as a driver for improvement. Please take a few minutes to read these stories and make sure that you and your council are also benefiting from the support on offer.
3. For further details about the support available and how sector led improvement is being taken forward in children's and adult social services please see www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement.

Innovation

4. As I mentioned in my last report, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Monmouthshire, Rotherham, Stoke and Wigan Councils 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. Over the next couple of months, a number of these Councils will be sharing their innovative proposal with the relevant LGA Board, starting with Cornwall and Monmouthshire at the Improvement Board on 17 September. Keep your eyes peeled for one of these Councils at a Board meeting near you soon!

Productivity

5. *Procurement Pledge* - Following feedback from our consultation during May and June, the LGA's Local Government Procurement Pledge has now been launched. Thank you for all of your helpful contributions to the consultation. Please take a moment to view the final pledge on the LGA website - www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10171/3504186/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE. The Pledge sets out an approach that will complement local government's strong track record on procurement, the existing regional procurement arrangements and portals, and be more accessible to local SMEs.

6. *Waste* - As part of our research into reducing the cost of waste disposal, I will soon have the honour of fitting one of the first macerators (Food Waste Disposers) in a new home that will be part of an innovative waste disposal trial. Severn Trent Water has agreed to 'host' this trial for us. It is the largest trial of its kind anywhere in the world. One thousand macerators will be installed in new or refurbished homes. The intention is to monitor the savings from removing a waste stream from collection and disposal and the impact, if any, on the sewers. Although the work is starting in September 2012, the full results from the programme will not be available until autumn 2013. I will keep you up-to-date with progress as the programme develops.

Leadership

7. *National Graduate Development Programme* - The 2012 intake of the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) have commenced their first of four rotations this month, with 77 participants so far having secured placements with 42 participating councils. I am delighted to welcome two graduates who are working here at the LGA. With placements including the Executive Office and the Members' Services, I look forward to working with them during the two years that they will be here with us.

Transparency

8. *Local Public Data Panel*- After the summer break, activity is picking up again on open data and transparency. I would like to extend my congratulations to fellow Board Member Councillor Tim Cheetham who in July was appointed to the Government's 'Local Public Data Panel'. I know he will do an excellent job at representing the sector's interests and will keep the Board apprised of developments.
9. **Your input required** - To help us to better represent local authorities' views, the LGA is launching a survey to hear from local authorities about how far open data and transparency strengthens local accountability, service improvements and efficiencies and local economic growth. We want to hear from councils about how they make data available, and where the greatest value lies in the use of data. Please keep a look out for this survey which will be sent to every council in early September.
10. Furthermore, we are inviting members and senior officers to a workshop about transparency and open data on 23 October 2012. We want to explore the value of local transparency and gather thoughts about how local authorities can take-up and make better use of open data through advice, tools and good practice, with a view to developing a sector line on transparency. If you are interested in taking part in the workshop, please e-mail transparency@local.gov.uk.
11. *Local Government Information Unit* - Councillor Ruth Cadbury, one of the Board's Deputy-Chairs, attended a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Local Government Group, supported by the Local Government Information Unit on 9 July 2012. The Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude MP, was a guest speaker and spoke about public service reform and its impact on local government.

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