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Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chair)

INNOVATION

Community Budgets Report

1. This month I responded to the Communities and Local Government Committee report on Community budgets. The report laid out the risk of these budgets being replaced if key issues were not resolved and called on the government to send a clear message that it will assist every local authority wishing to introduce Community Budgets and to set out the specific assistance it will provide them with. I responded agreeing with the points set out in the report. I also highlighted that it is important the government understands that Community Budgets and the Troubled Families programme have been pioneered by councils but only a fraction of the potential savings will be unlocked for councils unless the government fully commits to modernising the way it works. To read the full report, click [here](#).

Leading Innovation

2. On 1 November First magazine published an article in which I outlined the findings of the Accelerating Innovation in Local Government Research Project's recent publication, in partnership with the LGA. The project researched and identified key messages for leading councillors to drive innovation forward including, making sure councils agree a plan of the priority areas for future innovation, as well as genuinely involving frontline employees so the whole council feels involved with the innovation projects. The importance of councils persisting intelligently, despite many barriers, until the priority innovations are achieved was also emphasised. From the research, we have produced the publication 'Council Leaders' Key Actions for Innovation' so that other elected members can help their councils innovate. Councillors can use these actions as a checklist to review whether they could do more to achieve successful innovations in their local authority. To read the publication, click [here](#).

Knowledge Hub

3. After several months seeking to secure the future of the Knowledge Hub, I was very happy to announce this month that the LGA is forming a new partnership with CapacityGRID to assure the Hub's long-term future. Knowledge Hub is the most widely used online collaboration platform for public sector employees and public bodies and after receiving overwhelming support from the community, the LGA knew it was essential to secure a partnership. Under this partnership, Knowledge Hub staff will transfer to the CapacityGRID and join an enlarged team, which will assume overall operational and development management responsibility. The LGA will become a foundation partner and continue to use the Knowledge Hub as a strategic platform to collaborate with colleagues and members.

TRANSPARENCY

Further open data breakthrough funding for 2014/15

4. Cllr Tim Cheetham chaired the last "open data breakthrough funding" panel for this year, awarding the final funding of the £1 million total grant received from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). The funding is to enable open data release from local authorities and to support easier access to open data, supporting growth and innovation, contributing to local engagement with citizens, communities and business, and

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providing seed funding to create action. The LGA is managing the funding and received just under fifty applications, awarding funding to 16 authorities. BIS announced that they will make another £1 million available to local authorities in 2014/15.

Open Government Partnership

5. The Open Government Summit was held in London on 31 October to 1 November hosted by the prime minister and Francis Maud. The [Open Government Partnership](#) is a worldwide movement for transparency and open data from governments. Civil society networks across the world are seeking greater openness of government to enable them to engage with and empower citizens. The LGA had a stand in the exhibition promoting Rewiring Public Services and sector led initiatives on local transparency and open data, local information infrastructure, LG Inform and LG Inform Plus. Ministers from DCLG, foreign delegations and representatives from the public, private and third sector showed great interest in local government's approach to transparency. Peterborough, Hampshire and Sedgemoor Council were represented on the stand.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Workshops

6. This October the LGA ran the fourth in a series of 24-hour workshops for Chief Executives and District Council Leaders. Working with the District Councils Network, the workshops focused on how they can lead improvements in service delivery at their own councils. So far 43 District Councils have taken part in the events with 12 different councils (24 attendees) attending the October workshop. The final event in the series is planned for 28/29 November.

IMPROVEMENT

Councillors Guide to Procurement

7. The LGA Councillors Guide to Procurement was launched in October and highlights the key role councillors have as political champions of procurement. The guide is intended to help councillors achieve their ambitions for growth and economic success in the communities which they represent and serve.
8. As councillors, we must be at the heart of local priorities that determine our commissioning decisions. The private firms, businesses and voluntary organisations that are so important to local and regional economies need to view council contracts in a positive way and want to do business with their local authorities. This guide is set to help councils achieve just that, by setting out a strategic approach to procurement, framing a set of useful questions to ask, and busting a number of procurement myths. To read the guide, click [here](#).

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