

LGA Group Economy Programme Plan

Summary

This paper reflects recent discussions at LGA Executive about possible future changes to LGA Group governance structures. It seeks a member steer on the future work of a Group-wide Economy Programme Plan.

An oral update on the outcome of the 18 March LGA Executive meeting and officers' development of an LGA Group Programme Plan for work on the Economy will be given to the Board.

Recommendations

That members discuss the implications of these developments, and provide a political steer as to how the planning process for the Group Economy Programme Plan might proceed.

Action

Officers to reflect the board's steer in development of the Group Economy Programme Plan.

LGA Group Economy Programme Plan

Background

1. In January 2010 the LGA Executive made important decisions on a new political governance structure for the LGA Group. Key decisions that impact on to the Regeneration and Transport Board were:
 - to strengthen the Executive to become the new governing body that sets the strategic direction and priorities for the Group, with expanded membership to include regional representatives, the three special interest groups representing district, county and metropolitan councils, and the chairs of the central body boards;
 - to create nine group programme boards, in place of the LGA policy boards, to deliver the business plan priorities through more active engagement with councils and to strengthen the link between improvement and policy/lobbying (through common membership with central body boards);
2. As a result of these and other changes agreed as part of the Getting Closer process, the LGA Constitution, standing orders and political conventions will need to be amended, and these changes will be voted on at the Group General Assembly in July 2010.

LGA Group Business Plan

3. The LGA Group Business Plan for 2010-11, which sets high-level priorities for all organisations in the LGA Group, was launched earlier this year. It forms the basis of the individual business plans for each organisation in the LGA Group, and has five key priorities - all aimed at supporting local councils. These are:
 - Reputation;
 - Innovation and value for money;
 - Local democracy;
 - **Economy**;
 - Customer service
4. Full details of the Economy theme within the Business Plan are enclosed at **Annex A**. Copies of the full document will be tabled for members at the meeting.

LGA Group Economy Programme Plan

5. The Economy Programme Plan, currently being developed by officers, will ensure that the work of each organisation on issues relating to the Economy is aligned and does not duplicate the work of other bodies.
6. Following agreement of the Getting Closer recommendations at the General Assembly, the Regeneration and Transport Board would become the Economy Programme Board. It would act as the accountable member body for the Group-wide Economy Programme Plan.
7. Members are invited to provide a steer as to how the planning process for the Group Economy Programme Plan might proceed. In doing so members should have regard to the Executive's direction that future Programme working should promote the Group's priorities, "*through more active engagement with councils and [through]...strengthen[ed]...link[s] between improvement and policy/lobbying*".

Financial Implications

8. None arising from this report.

Implications for Wales

9. The Board will continue to represent the interests of Welsh authorities on relevant issues.

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Economy - supporting councils to lead their communities to prosperity in the economic recovery

Leading the local economy is key to leading the local community. In the face of the economic downturn, tighter public spending and the UK's commitments to carbon reduction, more will be expected of local government in providing leadership and generating capital for regeneration.

What we'll do:

Regeneration and growth

- make the case for capital spending and investment in infrastructure, as well as for the planning and investment decisions which influence physical development to be locally driven
- lobby for greater powers for councils to commission public transport and join up transport planning
- support councils with the new statutory roles on spatial planning, economic development and strategic housing
- help develop innovative models for funding infrastructure in a changed financial climate and the leadership and contract management capacity to deliver this
- help councils help businesses through advice on better regulation principles
- lobby to ensure the economic and regeneration benefits from the 2012 games are spread to all communities, not just London and the other games venues
- lobby for a more locally-led approach to public sector decision-making around tourism
- lobby for greater freedom for councils to use their licensing powers to develop their local leisure economy and attract visitors.

Energy and climate

- ensure councils can make homes more energy efficient
- promote local leadership of the transition to a lower carbon economy
- help councils protect against the consequences of a changing climate.

Skills and employment

- lobby on youth unemployment, including the Future Jobs Fund and apprenticeships
- lobby on welfare reform and worklessness
- lobby on the future of skills funding and governance
- help councils tackle worklessness locally, including support with apprenticeships and other ways they as employers can help tackle youth unemployment
- support councils and councillors with their responsibilities following the 16-19 funding transfer.

Additional grant-funded activity:

- Spatial planning and Local Development Frameworks – Planning Advisory Service (PAS)
- Private sector housing – LACORS
- DWP worklessness resources – IDEa
- Support with the Transport Act - IDEa.