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Improvement Board  
21 July 2009

Item 4

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## Total Place

### Summary

1. This paper:
  - outlines the Total Place programme;
  - identifies significant opportunities that it creates for local government as a whole; and
  - makes proposals for the ongoing role of the Improvement Board.

### Recommendations

2. Members' views are sought on the proposed role for the Improvement Board and specific activity, outlined in **paragraphs 16 and 17**.

### Action

3. Pursue the next steps as agreed by members.

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## Background

1. At their meeting on 15 April 2009 LGA Office Holders considered a paper outlining Total Place. The Total Place initiative has been developed by the sector and was heavily influenced by the work undertaken by the Leadership Centre with Cumbria County Council, the Cumbria District Councils and their public sector partners<sup>1</sup>. LGA Office Holders agreed that the LGA Group as a whole should support Total Place with the Leadership Centre taking the lead role. They also agreed that the Improvement Board should provide member oversight of Total Place.

### What is Total Place?

2. Total Place is a programme of 13 pilots (see Annex 1 for full list) which brings together central and local agencies within a place to achieve three things around a priority issue:
  - a. Can we fundamentally transform the way we do things locally (and centrally)?
  - b. Can we do this for less than we spend now?
  - c. Can we in so doing learn how we can really get to do things much better?
3. The recommendation for the Total Place pilots was made by Sir Michael Bichard in his Operational Efficiency Programme report and the 13 pilot areas were announced in the Budget. Pilots are expected to provide initial findings by October 2009 (i.e. to inform the pre-Budget report) with final reports in March 2010 (i.e. to inform the Budget).

### What will Total Place involve?

4. Total Place weaves together three complementary approaches to public service transformation:
  - i) A 'counting' approach that will map money flowing through the place (from central and local bodies) with the aim of better understanding the relationship between centrally and locally directed resources and between resources directed by different parts of the public sector and the impact that all of these have on outcomes.
  - ii) A 'culture' approach that looks at the working relationships between and across local and central partners and the extent to which they help or hinder improved outcomes.
  - iii) A 'customer insight' approach that looks at transformations to public services from the perspective of the citizen/customer.
5. These three elements have featured in earlier approaches to public service transformation but what makes Total Place distinctive is the explicit intention to

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<sup>1</sup> see *Calling Cumbria and Counting Cumbria* –  
<http://www.cumbriastrategicpartnership.org.uk/eLibrary/view.asp?id=27533>  
<http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/docs/Counting%20Cumbria%20.pdf>.

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consider all three at the same time. Each pilot area will use Total Place to consider a theme which is of particular local importance (e.g. vulnerable families, adult social care, child health, drugs and alcohol).

6. In this way Total Place should begin to generate opportunities for service transformation and improved efficiency.

## **How will Total Place be delivered?**

7. The work of Total Place will be undertaken by political leaders and managers drawn from across all the relevant public services within each pilot area with technical, consultancy and programme management support provided by the Leadership Centre and the LGA Group as a whole.
8. The LGA Group will have a particular role, for example, in ensuring that the work being undertaken by the Total Place pilots is quickly shared amongst them and with the wider local government sector to influence policy and support improvement. IDeA will support the pilots by leveraging in existing improvement support on leadership, efficiency, customer insight (including from the NHS Institute and the National Police Improvement Agency). IDeA will also work with those areas outside the pilots wanting to start their own locally led initiatives, facilitating the exchange of learning from formal and informal pilots across the rest of the sector. LGA Group leads will be assigned to each of the Total Place themes.
9. It is anticipated that within each pilot area there will need to be a number of working groups each considering the local theme from a particular angle. The exact nature of these working groups will need to be shaped by local circumstances for example:
  - a pilot with a focus on homelessness might want working groups to consider the opportunities for service transformation arising from new approaches to economic development, skills and training or mental health services;
  - a pilot with a focus on adult social care might want working groups to consider the opportunities for service transformation arising from new approaches to service design and delivery, joint commissioning across all public agencies or new approaches to funding.
10. The outputs from this work should be specific and deliverable improvements for local service users. These might be delivered through more effective collaboration, efficiency gains or fundamental service redesign. In many cases local partners will be able to deliver these improvements themselves through effective local leadership. In some cases, however, service transformation may require changes to national delivery structures and Total Place will provide an opportunity for central government and local partners to address these issues together. Sir Michael Bichard will chair a high-level group of officials from across central government and local partners which will consider these issues.

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Alongside this, a group comprising the Secretaries of State from key departments and Cllr David Parsons will provide political leadership to the project. From a local government perspective Total Place might generate some fundamental propositions for reform which the LGA might then pursue on its behalf in the run up to and beyond the next General Election.

## **Opportunities provided by *Total Place***

11. Total Place will be delivered in the context of the current economic, constitutional and political debates and the forthcoming general election, all of which present opportunities for local government as a sector.
12. The crisis over MPs expenses has put constitutional reform back on the agenda and 'localism' is now rhetorical common currency across all the main political parties. There are plenty of good principled arguments for localism but Total Place provides an opportunity to make the case for the *practical* benefits of greater local democratic control over a wider range of local public services in terms of both improved service and greater efficiency.
13. Total Place is specifically intended to enable pilots to develop proposals for substantial transformation of public services within their locality. In effect this provides an opportunity for an intensive period of evidence-based policy development. The opportunity is to set the direction for the next phase of public service reform including the future of the performance framework, CAA and local area agreements. This means that Total Place must deliver a small number of substantive, practical and politically attractive proposals which will help to clear the way for even more ambitious change in the longer-term.
14. The prospects for public spending are well understood and in particular the impact on local government services of anticipated political decisions to protect spending on health and education relative to other parts of the public sector. The opportunity presented by Total Place is to develop an effective counting methodology that enables local government to have a decisive impact on the way in which the spending squeeze is achieved in practice. Moreover the detailed work on public spending will underpin the policy propositions on service transformation and localism.
15. With opportunity there comes risk, which will need to be carefully managed. In particular there is a risk of:
  - unrealistic expectations about what can be delivered in the time; we can't solve all the challenges facing public services in the next 6-9 months
  - unrealistic assumptions about what is in practice deliverable across the entire sector in terms of efficiency savings based on anecdotal evidence in a small number of pilots.

## **Role of the Improvement Board**

16. If successful, Total Place will be of considerable interest across the LGA Group and local government more widely and it is expected that the LGA Officer Holders and Executive will continue to take a closer interest particularly in the context of preparations for the General Election. However, it is proposed that the Improvement Board focus its oversight of Total Place on two issues in particular:

- i) Member oversight: Providing member oversight to the programme as a whole ensuring that Total Place is delivered with maximum political engagement and leadership. In particular:
  - ensuring councils more generally understand and engage in the wider debate about the future of public service delivery, learning lessons from the pilots in real-time and taking steps to manage the transition to a fundamentally different future;
  - Providing political leadership and pressure around blockages to improvement and efficiency that are identified in the pilots.
- ii) Future of performance/improvement framework: Ensuring that the work of the Total Place pilots underpins policy thinking on the future of performance and improvement mechanisms across the public sector. In particular:
  - What does Total Place mean for future governance arrangements, partnership working and delivery through local area agreements;
  - What does Total Place mean for improvement support in a world that is increasingly focused on cross-public sector improvement and delivery and what is the leadership and behaviour change necessary to achieve that. How can we best prepare for that e.g. role of RIEPs and LGA group

17. In practice, this could involve:

- Reporting to the LGA Executive, through the monthly chair's report, on progress in the pilots to inform ongoing policy development and lobbying across all the LGA boards;
- Facilitating discussion with council leaders to develop propositions for the future of the new performance framework and wider policy changes, for example at the next Improvement Board away day;
- Facilitating discussion more generally with members on the cultures and behaviours necessary for local leadership in the future, through conferences and pro-active media work. (Two LGA Group Total Place conferences are being organised and it will feature in a plenary session at the November Improvement and Innovation conference);
- Ensuring the experience of Total Place influences the LGA group business plan;
- Ensuring strong links with RIEPs through the RIEP member forum, encouraging RIEPs to provide appropriate support to the pilots and wider knowledge sharing and working with RIEPs to consider their role post next spending review;

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- Wider communications, partly through trade press, to raise awareness and profile.

18. Members' views are sought on the proposed role for the board and specific activity, as outlined above.

19. Subject to members' agreement future meetings of the Improvement Board will receive reports on the progress being made in the Total Place pilots and emerging policy implications.

## **Financial Implications**

This work can be carried out within the existing budgets of the LGA group.

## **Implications for Wales**

None direct

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**Annex 1**

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## **Where are the pilots?**

Dorset, Poole & Bournemouth  
Kent  
Croydon  
Lewisham  
Luton & Central Bedfordshire  
Leicester & Leicestershire  
Coventry & Solihull  
Worcestershire  
Birmingham  
Bradford  
Wigan & Manchester City Region  
South Tyneside, Gateshead & Sunderland  
Durham

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