



Local Government Association

improvement board

agenda

Tuesday 24 November 2009

3.00pm

Boardroom Suite

Hilton Deansgate Manchester

303 Deansgate

Manchester M3 4LQ

To: Members of LGA improvement board

cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.lga.gov.uk

Improvement Board

24 November 2009

There will be a meeting of the **Improvement Board at 3.00pm on Tuesday, 24 November 2009** in the Board Suite, Hilton Manchester Deansgate, 303 Deansgate, Manchester M3 4LQ:

Attendance Sheet

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Apologies

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

Labour: Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@lga.gov.uk
Conservative: Angela Page: 020 7664 3264 email: angela.page@lga.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat: Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@lga.gov.uk
Independent: Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independent.group@lga.gov.uk

Location

A map showing the location of the Hilton Manchester Deansgate is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

Cathy Boyle, Member Support Team Manager: Tel: 020 7664 3205; Fax: 020 7664 3232; e-mail: cathy.boyle@lga.gov.uk).

Carers' Allowance: As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £5.73 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. Children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Improvement Board

Date: 11.08.09

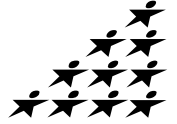
Improvement Board - Membership 2009/2010

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (6)	
David Parsons CBE[Chairman]	Leicestershire CC
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Peter Goldsworthy	Chorley BC
Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
*Andrew Povey	Surrey CC
Substitutes:	
*Philip Atkins	Staffordshire CC
*Peter Thompson	Hounslow LB
Labour (4)	
Christine Bowden	Newham LB
*Ann Lucas [Deputy Chair]	Coventry City
*Tony McDermott	Halton BC
Ian Swithenbank CBE [ex-officio]	Northumberland CC
Substitutes:	
*Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
Russell Roberts	Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC
Liberal Democrat (3)	
* Jill Shortland [Vice-Chair]	Somerset CC
Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
Edward Lord JP	Corporation of London
Substitute:	
John Commons	Manchester City
Independent (1)	
*Geoff Knight [Deputy Chair]	Lancaster City

* new member

LGA Improvement Board Attendance 2009-2010

Councillors	10/09/09	24/11/09	19/1/10	23/3/10	19/5/10	20/7/10
Conservative Group						
David Parsons CBE	Yes					
Peter Fleming	Yes					
Peter Goldsworthy	Yes					
Jonathen Owen	Yes					
Richard Stay	Yes					
Andrew Povey	Yes					
Labour Group						
Ian Swithenbank CBE	No					
Christine Bawden	Yes					
Ann Lucas	Yes					
Tony McDermott	Yes					
Lib Dem Group						
Jill Shortland	Yes					
Edward Lord JP	Yes					
Sir David Williams CBE	Yes					
Independent						
Geoff Knight	Yes					



Agenda

Improvement Board

3pm – 5 pm 24 November 2009

Hilton Deansgate Manchester Hotel

Page no.

For Discussion

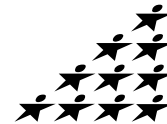
Standing items

1. Freedom to Lead - developing a new accountability framework
2. Current Performance Framework
 - a. CAA update
 - b. LAAs update
 - c. National Indicator Set
3. RIEPs update
4. Total Place

For Information/Noting

5. Note of the Last Meeting

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 19 January 2010



Freedom to Lead – developing a new accountability framework

Summary

At the last meeting of the Board in September, members agreed proposals for a significant programme of work to develop a new sector led accountability framework and set the strategic direction for this work. This report updates the Board on the work that has taken place since then. In particular, it highlights the publication of *Freedom to Lead*, a call for evidence from the sector on what a new framework could look like. Input from the sector will help inform the development of draft proposals which will be brought to the Board in January for full discussion.

Recommendations

That the Improvement Board:

- notes the work underway as part of the *Freedom to Lead* campaign and the intention to bring draft proposals to the next meeting in January
- offers any further guidance on the issues raised in the *Freedom to Lead* consultation brief.

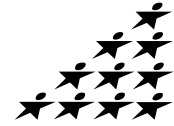
Action

That LGA Group officers continue to develop proposals for a new accountability framework, for discussion in January.

Contact Officer: Jo Miller

Phone No: Phone No: 020 7664 3276

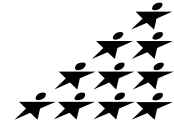
Email: jo.miller@lga.gov.uk



24 November 2009

1. Freedom to Lead – developing a new accountability framework

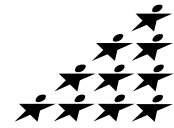
- 1.1 At the end of October, *Freedom to Lead*, the Improvement Board's campaign, was formally launched for a new accountability framework which has local people and localities at its heart rather than government and the regulators. The consultation brief is **attached** as an Annex to this paper.
- 1.2 *Freedom to Lead* launches the debate, sets out some of the key issues we will be considering and invites anyone with an interest in how our country is governed locally to submit evidence that would add weight to the case for change.
- 1.3 The consultation brief has been sent to Council Leaders and Chief Executives, Government Ministers, Shadow Ministers, other leading politicians, senior civil servants, the Inspectorates, RIEPs, central body boards and other stakeholders.
- 1.4 The deadline for response is 30 November and officers will update the Board orally at the meeting.
- 1.5 In addition we are using opportunities to engage with members and officers from across the sector at various meetings. These include a meeting of the RIEP Directors and the Chief Executive's Task group in early December. RIEPs have also agreed to discuss the campaign at meetings in their regions. Of course the LGA's Improvement and Innovation conference will also be exploited to build the momentum behind the campaign. *Freedom to Lead* has been sent to all delegates and plenary and workshop speakers. In addition a specific workshop is planned at the conference and an offer to each of the political groups to discuss the topic in their closed sessions has also been made.
- 1.6 Work is also well underway on identifying practice from other countries and this will be fed in to the next phase of work. In addition, the second CAA survey includes a number of specific questions which will help to inform the campaign. Annex 1 sets out the key milestones of the campaign.
- 1.7 *Freedom to Lead* and the call for a significant cut in the overall burden and cost of the current accountability regime is a key part of the LGA's Pre Budget Report submission.



24 November 2009

2. Setting the Pace

- 2.1 Board members will recall that the campaign around *Freedom to Lead* builds on the work arising from Setting the Pace, the developing framework for sector led help.
- 2.2 Setting the Pace is now being taken forward as part of the wider *Freedom to Lead* campaign. Discussions have taken place at civil servant level with CLG about the developing framework. It is recognised that a key aspect of the framework will be the need to look at the ability of the sector to facilitate the delivery of significant and timely capacity to turn performance around, corporately or at a service level, when there are serious failings in high risk areas.
- 2.3 Therefore, we are currently facilitating meetings with children's services improvement stakeholders (from the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO,) Ofsted and the Department of Children, School and Families (DCSF) to widen our understanding of successful improvement models within children's services and to discuss a sector-led approach to children's services improvement. The first meeting was successful in gaining a shared understanding of the issues and this group is scheduled to meet again on 17 November.
- 2.4 The consultation responses also highlighted the need to look at how we as a sector support authorities on aspects of partnership working, from turning around dysfunctional partnerships to promoting excellent practice in partnership working.
- 2.5 We have already been working alongside health and police improvement agencies to design and deliver support to LSPs, for example in Surrey and Herefordshire. We are recruiting more peers from partner organisations and we will also be distilling the learning from the Total Place pilots on leading partnerships.
- 2.6 The responses to the consultation also made clear that we need to continue to promote the case for effective sector-led improvement and how it is more efficient and effective than inspections. As a result we have worked with government on launching the Local Innovation Scheme, a more sector-led awards scheme to replace the Beacon Scheme. We are also considering work to collate evidence of the impact of the various peer support methodologies we use.



Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

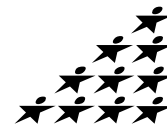
Implications for Wales

As reported at the last meeting there is a different approach to performance management in Wales and we will be drawing on the lessons of the system in Wales as part of this work.

Contact Officer: Jo Miller

Phone No: Phone No: 020 7664 3276

Email: jo.miller@lga.gov.uk



Annex 1

'Freedom to Lead' Work Programme

This annex provides an overview of the activity that is being taken forward as part of the *Freedom to Lead* campaign.

Overall Campaign

- 'Call for evidence' published 27/10/09
- Response deadline 30/11/09
- Responses analysed Dec 09
- Draft 'place-based performance and accountability framework' approved by Improvement Board 19/01/10
- Consultation on framework Feb 10
- Final 'place-based performance and accountability framework' approved by Improvement Board March 10

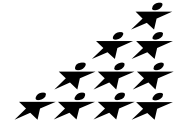
Workstreams: Each of the three workstreams outlined below will feed in to the development of the place-based performance and accountability framework'.

Workstream 1: Local delivery, accountability and governance

- Proposals on future of the national indicator set submitted to Improvement Board 24/11/09
- Proposals on governance of partnerships, learning from Total Place, developed Dec 09
- Information on the cost of regulation collated to feed in to overall proposals Dec 09

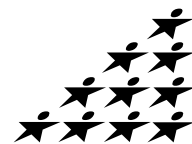
Workstream 2: Reducing the burden of regulation and inspection

- Headline messages about CAA Year 2 to be discussed at Improvement Board 24/11/09
- Co-ordinated communications to coincide with launch of CAA results 12/12/09
- Sector evaluation of first year of CAA published at Group CAA conference 26/01/10
- Local accountability and communicating performance IDeA/Localis report Feb 10



Workstream 3: Supporting sector-led improvement

- Children's Services - IDeA, LGA meet with ADCS, C4EO, DCSF and Ofsted to discuss implications of Setting the Pace and wider Freedom to Lead work
17/11/09
- Further discussion with partners (police, health etc) re co-ordination of improvement support to LSPs Nov 09 – Jan 10



Local Government Association



freedom to lead: developing a new accountability framework

a call for evidence



The complexity of the challenges facing our communities, along with pressures on public spending require radically new and responsive ways of working across the public sector. Locally elected councillors, as leaders of their communities, are committed to achieving this – but we need a new framework of accountability that liberates local public sector partners to work together more effectively whilst at the same time ensures they are driven by and responsive to, the needs of their communities.

The Local Government Association (LGA) Group is leading a debate about the shape of that new accountability framework. This consultation brief launches the debate, sets out some of the key issues we will be considering and invites you, your authority and your local strategic partnership to contribute. Alongside this “call for evidence” we will initiate an extensive programme of consultation and discussion with the sector and our partners leading to final proposals in Spring 2010.

“We have a real opportunity over the next few months to streamline the current system of targets, performance monitoring and inspection, to secure real freedoms that will help councils and our local partners respond more effectively to the challenges we face locally. The proposals we develop need to be informed by your knowledge, experience and ideas – they will be the stronger for it”



Cllr David Parsons, CBE
Chairman, LGA Improvement Board

The current economic recession changes everything. From sustained growth in public spending over the last decade most commentators are now predicting a lengthy period of spending constraint and real term cuts.

Nowhere will the impact of this be felt more sharply than at the local level – the point of delivery. Councils are already responding, driving forward year on year service improvements and efficiency savings. Between 2005 and 2009 councils made £5.5bn efficiency savings – way beyond government targets.

But this is not enough. The complexity of the social and environmental challenges we face along with the severity of the economic situation demand radical new solutions across the public sector at local level.

Public services need to be redesigned and reshaped around citizens and consumers. Efficiency gains need to be driven out by greater joined up working at local level eradicating duplication and waste and focusing the totality of public sector resources towards local priorities. Innovation and creativity must be released by putting users and frontline staff at the heart of service design and delivery.

Locally elected politicians are committed to achieving this, but the necessary revolution in local public service delivery can only be brought about if the constraints imposed on councils and their local public sector partners by the current framework of funding streams, targetary, performance monitoring and inspection are radically reformed.

Local public service providers need to be liberated from unnecessary controls so that they can develop tailored responses appropriate to the challenges of their communities in a coordinated, efficient and cost effective way.

Moreover the National Audit Office refer to the cost of monitoring and inspecting local government as being in the region of £2bn. There are similar burdens on other sectors too. So it is neither desirable or affordable to maintain regulation and inspection at its current scale and cost.

The Total Place pilots are already exploring how councils and their local public sector partners can work more effectively at local level and it will be important to learn the lessons from them. Policy thinking continues to develop in parallel in areas outside the pilots.

The main political parties have already understood the need for change. A range of options is already being considered including rationalising and streamlining the existing performance framework, radically reducing the national indicator set and cutting back on inspection and abolishing CAA.

Local Government therefore needs to develop its own proposals - proposals that work for us, for our partners and for our communities. The significant improvements and efficiency gains we have achieved in recent years provide us with a firm basis to do that.

Earlier this year we consulted you on proposals to develop a framework for sector-led help under the title "Setting the Pace". We are also inviting separately detailed views on councils' experience of CAA. But we now need to move beyond focussing on individual components to develop a proposition on a new accountability framework as a whole.

We need a new framework that supports local outcomes, one that is about serving local people rather than serving the machinery of Government. We think this involves:

- Arrangements that reinforce localities' ability to set local priorities, with an emphasis on accountability to local people, rather than performance reporting to government;
- Rebalancing the focus of performance monitoring and reporting with a greater emphasis on locality self evaluation and peer challenge along with a resulting reduction in the burden of performance monitoring and inspection by government and the inspectorates - freeing councils and their partners to focus on local priorities and enhance local accountabilities;
- Local government's direction of its own support to deliver ambitious efficiency savings and drive its own improvement and a real and practical commitment from Government and the inspectorates to the framework for supporting councils in difficulty. As we pursue the arguments for further devolution of improvement funding to localities we must also explore how best to coordinate and deliver improvement support to local partnerships.

Each of these issues is discussed in more detail below – with specific issues and questions on which we are seeking your views.

At the same time we will also take into account the implications from the CAA area and organisational assessment results, to be reported in December and lessons emerging from the Total Place pilots.

How to respond:

We are keen to receive views on the issues raised in this consultation brief from council leaders, opposition group leaders and other senior local politicians, from chief executives and senior colleagues, from councils as a whole, from Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) and from Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and constituent partners.

Please use this consultation brief to promote a debate in your area, in the way that is most appropriate locally.

Please send your views to the LGA Group by 30 November at jointhedebate@lga.gov.uk

In the meantime if you have any questions about this work or wish to discuss any aspect of it then in the first instance please contact: Nick Easton (nick.easton@lga.gov.uk) tel 020 7664 3278), or Adam Benjamin (adam.benjamin@idea.gov.uk) tel 020 7296 6853)

Local delivery, accountability and governance:

Our aim is to ensure successor arrangements to Local Area Agreements (LAAs) that support the achievement of local priorities by strengthening local leadership and delivery through partnership. We need LAAs that are truly local, with an 'outward' focus, engaging local politicians, partners and citizens in a debate about local priorities and how they should be delivered rather than an 'upwards' focus to government.

Issues for consideration:

- Should there be a national indicator set? If so should we press for a smaller set of national indicators that reflect issues of indisputable national concern?
- How can we achieve greater flexibility in the LAA negotiation process to allow more local priorities? Is the bureaucracy associated with the current process sustainable going forward? Can we replace central oversight with greater peer involvement?
- How can we best facilitate the engagement of other local partners in such a way that partnerships are able to align plans and budgets accordingly? Are new powers or incentives required? Are new governance models the answer?
- Would an end to all ring-fenced funding allow greater flexibility to align resources to outcomes and therefore a more efficient use of resources locally?
- What are the implications of a smaller set of indicators and the advent of CAA for the Government Office role in monitoring PSA and LAA delivery? What sort of future, if any, should GOs have?
- Should we develop a way of collecting our own evidence on outcomes and expenditure? Where should this function reside – at local, regional or national level?



reducing the burden of regulation and inspection:

Our aim is to rebalance the focus of performance monitoring and reporting with greater weight given to local self-evaluation and the sector itself having more of a role in providing assurance, challenge and sharing good practice – thereby reducing the burden of regulation and inspection and freeing localities to focus on local priorities and enhancing local accountability.

Issues for consideration:

- has CAA been helpful in driving improved outcomes across partnerships and if not how should it be changed in the short-term?
- whether CAA has a longer term future and if not what arrangements we would like to see in its place. What sort of inspection would be acceptable and in what circumstances?
- whether the current configuration of inspectorates makes sense going forward. Would further streamlining towards a single inspectorate for place be more logical and cost-effective?
- how can we best work with partners who have common concerns?
- should we commit to a systematic role in providing assurance, critical challenge and sharing the learning which could be less burdensome, cheaper and provide a means of scaling back the burden of inspection?
- is there a place for national minimum standards as a way of guaranteeing performance in key areas and if so should the sector itself play a role in establishing and monitoring standards?
- how should we best communicate partnership performance to local people? What sort of support do localities need to do this effectively?
- how can we secure greater progress in reducing the burden of data returns to central government?

For further information please contact the Local Government Association at:
Local Government House, Smith Square,
London SW1P 3HZ

or telephone LGconnect, for all your LGA queries on 020 7664 3131
Fax: 020 7664 3030
Email: info@lga.gov.uk

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supporting sector-led improvement

Our aim is to secure a commitment from departments and the inspectorates to the local government improvement framework (Setting the Pace) and further devolution of resources to localities to support improvement and efficiency.

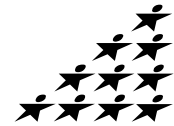
Issues to be considered will include:

- how best to provide support to local partnerships, including the longer-term role of the sector's improvement architecture, including the Regional Improvement and Efficiency partnerships (RIEPs);
- how to help councils and partners meet the significant efficiency challenges they are facing? What are the barriers to further progress on procurement and shared services and what can we do to help? How can we drive efficiency savings across the public sector at local level?
- the case for a reduction in the number of improvement bodies across all sectors and the scope for further devolution.



Local Government Association

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 400 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.



Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) update

Summary

This report updates members on the implementation of the Comprehensive Area Assessment, provides an opportunity for members to shape LGA messages around publication of the CAA results on 10 December and invites members to agree key messages about how we expect CAA to work in year 2.

Recommendations

That the report be noted.

That members agree key LGA group messages around publication of the CAA results on 10 December.

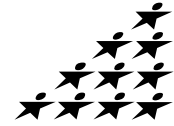
That members agree LGA group messages about how we expect CAA to work in year 2.

Action

In the light of members' comments, develop a media plan for publication of the CAA results on 10 December.

Develop proposals for CAA year 2 in the light of members' views and feed into the sector evaluation report.

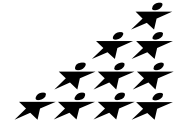
Contact Officer: Nick Easton
Phone No: 0207 664 3278
Email: nick.easton@lga.gov.uk



Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

Background

1. This report updates members on the implementation of the Comprehensive Area Assessment since the last report to the Board on this issue in July.
2. **“CAA Watch”**
 - 2.1 Over the summer the LGA invited feedback on the implementation of CAA from leaders and surveyed all councils. The feedback has been analysed and the results summarised in “CAA: how is it measuring up so far?” which has been circulated to members and is available on the LGA website.
 - 2.2 In summary the early feedback from the sector indicates that whilst there are some positives - Inspectorates seem to be focusing on the highest priorities for the area, and council engagement with the CAA lead has generally been productive – significant concerns still exist:
 - only one in ten think it is reducing the overall burden;
 - seven in ten say CAA is not being effectively coordinated between inspectorates;
 - just under two thirds believe it is not sufficiently focused on *future* outcomes.
 - 2.3 As a result Cllr Parsons wrote to Audit Commission Chairman, Michael O’Higgins, calling on the Commission to ensure that the Inspectorates deliver on the ambition for CAA by working together more effectively at local level and delivering the promised reduction in the burden of assessment.
 - 2.4 In his response Michael O’Higgins acknowledged that “...we and our partner inspectorates have to do more to demonstrate a fully joined up approach locally – one that genuinely reduces the burden on local services.”
 - 2.5 With regard to the Use of Resources assessment, Michael O’Higgins acknowledged that “... it seems clear from this and other feedback that our attempt to focus use of resources on outcomes rather than process is not perceived to have delivered the more streamlined assessment we intended. As part of our wider CAA evaluation we are particularly examining what immediate action we can take to address this for next year, alongside a more fundamental review of use of resources”.



Improvement Board

Item 2a

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2.6 As the CAA assessment process draws to a close, we have, as previously agreed, repeated this exercise – inviting council leaders for their views and surveying councils – and these results will inform our evaluation of the first year of CAA to be published at a Conference on CAA and the future of inspection, on 26 January 2010.

3. CAA and member Peers

3.1 The Inspectorates have sought to involve peers and “experts by experience” in the CAA process – providing expert advice on a call off basis and in the quality assurance process. In addition the Inspectorates agreed to a proposal to “pair” CAA leads with a member peer – to help ensure that CAA leads understood the political dynamics in their areas, etc.

3.2 IDeA has reviewed member peers’ experience and it is clear that, generally speaking, those peers appointed to support the CAA leads feel they have had little opportunity to get involved and contribute. This may be partly explained by the fact they were appointed part way through the process. The Commission has acknowledged this and that there is more to be done to ensure member peers will be able to make a meaningful contribution in year 2.

4. CAA results

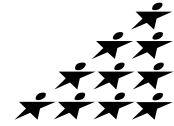
4.1 The first round of assessments is now drawing to a close. Localities have had the opportunity to comment on their pre-publication reports and to request a review of flags and scores. The CAA results will be published on 10 December.

4.2 The second CAA watch exercise is designed to gather information about flags and scores and early feedback should be available to report to the Board. Members will also be aware of the flags and scores for their own area/council and the Board meeting will provide a timely opportunity to review the situation and begin to consider some of the key messages the LGA should promote around publication of the results. A detailed media plan can then be prepared to ensure any agreed messages are promoted consistently across the LGA Group.

5. CAA and year 2

5.1 At this stage there are no signs that the Inspectorates plan to revise substantially the CAA framework for Year 2. However they will be looking to revise the more detailed guidance to inspectorate staff, drawing on feedback from the sector and the results of the Inspectorates’ evaluation of CAA.

5.2 In order to influence this process we are we are preparing a sector evaluation of the first year of CAA, drawing on the feedback from leaders and councils, and



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setting out headline proposals for year 2. In terms of overall messages for year 2 the following are suggested, at this stage

- we continue to support the ambition for a comprehensive assessment of outcomes delivered in local areas, the CAA area assessment begins to take us in this direction but more work needs to be done to realise the ambition;
- the first year results set a “baseline” for the future. We do not expect the Inspectorates to undertake a full re-run of the area and organisational assessments in each area;
- rather in year 2 the Inspectorates should focus on what has changed or on particular issues identified in year 1. The focus of the assessments in year 2 should be discussed and agreed with localities;
- in addition we expect to see clear evidence that the intensity of the assessment is proportionate to risk/performance. High performing areas/organisations should receive a demonstrably lighter touch assessment;
- greater weight should be given to council/partners own assessment of their performance with the Inspectorates only undertaking further activity where necessary;
- the general approach outlined above should apply equally to the Use of Resources assessment, and in addition the Commission should address the overlap that arises from the outcomes focus in both the Use of Resources assessment and the area assessment so that duplication is avoided in year 2;
- inspectorate activity needs to be properly joined up and the Inspectorates should clearly articulate how they propose to achieve this going forward;
- member peers need to be involved more fully from the start.

5.3 Thinking about the longer term future of inspection and assessment, beyond CAA year 2, is being taken forward under the “Freedom to Lead” banner.

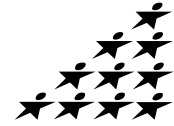
Financial Implications

6. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Implications for Wales

7. There is a different approach to performance management in Wales.

Contact Officer: Nick Easton
Phone No: 0207 664 3278
Email: nick.easton@lga.gov.uk



Local Area Agreement update (LAA) update

Summary

This report seeks Board member approval to the key themes that been developed with the sector on the future of LAA policy, so that they can be developed as part of the 'Freedom to Lead – developing a new accountability framework' campaign.

This report also updates Board members on this year's LAA Review and Refresh, including scope and timescales.

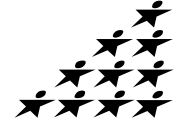
Recommendations

That the Board approve the key themes that have been developed with the sector so they can be developed as part of the 'Freedom to Lead – developing a new accountability framework' campaign.

Notes the implications of the LAA Review and Refresh.

Action

Subject to Board member approval, LGA Group officers to develop policy options through the 'Freedom to Lead – developing a new accountability framework' campaign.



Local Area Agreements Update

1. Local Area Agreements - Future Policy Development

1.1 Over the summer LGA Group sought views of the sector on the future of Local Area Agreement (LAA) policy. The sector has been engaged through the following activity:

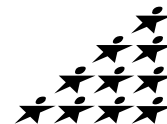
- A national conference ‘New routes to better outcomes’ on 20 May 2009 brought together views of the sector, dealing with the complexities of making things happen through partnership working. Speakers included Councillor Sharon Taylor who gave an elected member perspective on partnership working and the current performance framework. The conference informed a publication to support partnerships look ahead and a practical guide on partnership delivery.
- LGA Group contributed to a Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) Task and Finish Group on the future of LAA policy and arranged for the group to be chaired by John Smith, Assistant Chief Executive Devon County Council.
- The LGA/IDeA LAA Advisory Network, a network of 35 local authority representatives, met on 9 September. They reviewed the experience of the current LAA framework and considered principles for a new sector led approach to performance management. The Network also considered how they might support the LGA Improvement Board develop a future model.

1.2 Five broad themes have come through from this activity, against each of which there could be a range of policy options developed.

1.3 This report seeks Board members’ approval of the five themes in order that officers can further develop the themes as part of the ‘Freedom to Lead – developing a new accountability framework’ campaign.

- **A single framework**

The single most important thing to improve LAAs would be the alignment of the performance frameworks. To achieve true prioritisation, LAAs would operate as close as possible within an ideal environment of a single cross-sector framework. This streamlined framework would have fewer targets overall and greater coherence based on common principles.



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- **A better balance**

A better balance of national and local priorities and a simpler way of arriving at that balance. Evidence from negotiations shows that local and national priorities are very often the same, with disagreement mostly only on a minority of priorities and at the margin of target levels. LAAs could aim to achieve better outcomes by being more local overall.

- **Ambition & Efficiencies**

A future framework would need to put a stronger accent on value for money through promoting innovation, transformation and efficiencies.

- **Strengthened Local Leadership**

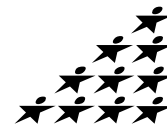
A future framework will need to promote local leadership, empowering local partners to collaborate on longer-term outcomes and be more accountable to local people.

- **Citizens and Communities**

A future framework will need to find the best possible fit between LAA priorities on the one hand and ensuring fairness and consistent minimum standards on the other. The emphasis would be accountability to citizens.

2. Local Area Agreements - Review and Refresh 2009/10

2. On behalf of the Improvement Board, LGA Group has influenced the review and refresh of the current 2008-2011 LAAs by involvement in the CLG LAA Project Board and also arranged sector input through Adrian Smith, Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 2.2 The review and refresh timeline and negotiation parameters have now been agreed across government departments and with the Government Offices.
- 2.3 Unlike the first LAA review (2008/09), this review will follow CAA, which will align the various milestones of the performance cycle for the first time. Reviews will be based on CAA and avoid any separate assessments. The focus of the reviews will be deciding what more needs to be done to achieve agreed priorities, rather than negotiating targets.
- 2.4 The review will provide an opportunity to refresh targets against the limited suite of indicators exempted from reward lockdown last spring. In a few areas, by exception, there may also be one or two other targets to be finalised, for example in the nine areas currently without a year-three target on teenage pregnancy.



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- 2.5 On review, LGA Group has lobbied for government requests for information to be limited, and less overall than last year. Any national reports will be few in number, limited in scope and draw on existing data.
- 2.6 On refresh, LGA Group has lobbied for Government to avoid reopening LAAs, unless merited clearly by findings in CAA. LGA Group and sector representatives have lobbied to avoid reopening LAAs beyond a limited set of indicators. Indicators that will potentially be revisited include those relating to the Place Survey, indicators where source data has or is to be changed and indicators that were deferred in April 2009 due to late data.

Timeline

2.7 The key milestones are set out below:

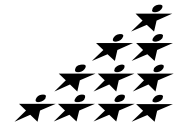
- 13 November 2009: LSPs forward their latest 'Self-Assessment Performance Report' to Government Offices (NB: this is optional for local areas)
- December – January 2010: Annual Review discussions between Government Offices and local authorities and their partners
- 25 January 2010: Government Offices annual review report to CLG.
- 12 March 2010: Local Authority adoption of LAAs (NB: this is the deadline, but it might be in advance, depending upon schedule of Council or Cabinet Meetings).
- 15 March 2010: Refresh process concluded and submission of final LAAs to CLG.
- By Weds 31 March 2010: Ministerial Approval.

Local Arrangements

2.8 Any revisions to an LAA need to be approved in line with the arrangements that have been put in place locally by the responsible local authority.

Alignment with other performance frameworks

- 2.9 LGA Group have lobbied to ensure that LAA reviews are properly informed by and linked to related processes from other performance frameworks during the autumn in order to minimise the burden on local areas.
- 2.10 Government Offices will liaise with the Audit Commission CAA Leads at an early stage so that Direction of Travel assessments inform the review and avoid duplication. Assessments emerging from other performance assessments (e.g.



Vital Signs and the Analysis of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) strategic assessments) will also be considered as part of the review.

Financial Implications

3. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

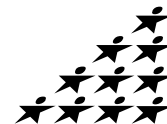
Implications for Wales

4. The LAAs do not apply in Wales.

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The National Indicator set

Summary

This report updates the Board on the progress of a government led review of the national indicator set and invites members to agree a submission to the review.

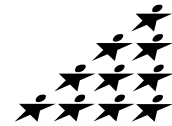
Recommendations

That the Board agree the proposed submission to the current review of the national indicator set (**attached** at Annex A).

Action

Submit LGA views to the review process.

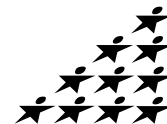
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The National Indicator set (NIS)

1. Background

- 1.1 The national indicator set was developed by Government as part of the Comprehensive Spending review 2007. The indicators reflect the Government's national priorities as expressed through PSAs and Departmental Strategic Objectives. The NIS is an important part of the performance framework. It is meant to represent the only measures on which central government will performance manage outcomes delivered by councils working alone or in partnership. Performance against each of the indicators is to be reported for every single tier and county council LSP. All other sets of indicators, including Best Value performance Indicators (BVPIs) were to be abolished from April 2008.
- 1.2 If there is to be another set of indicators they would be introduced after the next General Election. In theory they would take effect from April 2011 and would need to be available by October 2010 for LAA negotiations, implying some form of consultation during summer 2010.
- 1.3 In preparation, CLG are currently conducting a review of the National Indicator Set with the aim of establishing an agreed process and approach for delivering an improved set for the next spending cycle. The review is being conducted through the inter-departmental NIS Review Project Board on which the sector is represented.
- 1.4 The review will need to take account of Sir Michael Bichard's work for the Government's Operational Efficiency Programme which recommended that: *"CLG should lead on reforming, and where possible reducing, the national indicator set ahead of the next round of LAAs to support effective local prioritisation. This should include making the indicators more relevant, outcome focussed, cross-cutting and measurable; where possible reducing the number of LAA targets to focus on a smaller number of priorities at the local level; and examining the approach to mandatory indicators to ensure that they accurately reflect those outcomes that are an absolute priority for government in every place."*
- 1.5 At the same time however the Laming report into the Protection of Children in England (March 09) recommended that: *The Government should introduce new statutory targets for safeguarding and child protection alongside the existing statutory attainment and early years*

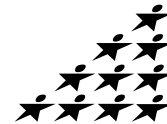


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targets as quickly as possible. The National Indicator Set should be revised with new national indicators for safeguarding and child protection developed for inclusion in Local Area Agreements for the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

2. Progress of the Review

- 2.1 As part of the review process Government departments have been reviewing their own indicators against a common set of criteria agreed through the Review Board. The Government Office network is currently facilitating a series of workshops to gather feedback from councils and local partners about their experience of the NIS. CLG aim to conclude the current stage of the review in December with a recommended process and approach for developing a new indicator set for the next spending review cycle.
- 2.2 It is important that the sector has a strong input to the review and this has been provided by sector representatives on the Review Board. In addition it is proposed that the LGA support and reinforce their input by making a submission to the review.
- 2.3 A draft submission, developed with input from sector representatives on the Review Board, is **attached** at Annex A. In summary the key messages are that:
- The complexity of the social, economic and environmental challenges facing local communities along with the severity of the economic situation demand new ways of working across the public sector at local level;
 - Local public service providers need to be able to develop tailored responses to the challenges in their areas in a coordinated, efficient and cost effective way; locally the Total Place pilots are exploring how this can be achieved in practice;
 - However national targets and indicators are one of the more frequently cited obstacles that prevent partners working together or front line staff being able to exercise greater innovation and creativity in service delivery;
 - The national performance and accountability framework (including the NIS) needs to support and reinforce these new ways of working. Going forward
 - A new National Indicator Set should be not only for councils but for all public sector bodies in a locality;
 - It should contain a better balance of outcome indicators, reinforcing partnership working;
 - Indicators should focus on what is important – and by doing so there should be scope to reduce the size of the total set, thereby providing greater flexibility locally;
 - In the meantime much greater progress needs to be made to reduce the requirements on councils to supply performance data outside the NIS.



3. Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

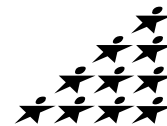
4. Implications for Wales

The NIS does not apply in Wales.

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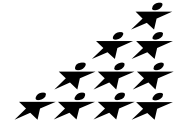


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LGA submission to the review of the national indicator set

The LGA welcomes the current review of the national indicator set and the opportunity the sector has had to contribute to the process. This submission sets out the LGA's views and is designed to support and reinforce the input sector colleagues have already made to the review.

- The complexity of the social, economic and environmental challenges facing local communities along with the severity of the economic situation demand new ways of working across the public sector at local level.
- Local public service providers need to be able to develop tailored responses to the challenges in their areas in a coordinated, efficient and cost effective way. Locally the Total Place pilots are exploring how this can be achieved in practice.
- The national performance and accountability framework (including the NIS) needs to support and reinforce these new ways of working. The NIS is an improvement on the BVPI framework – and the cross cutting nature of some of the indicators can be a stimulus to improved partnership working.
- However national targets and indicators are still one of the more frequently cited obstacles that prevent partners working together or front line staff being able to exercise greater innovation and creativity in service delivery. The existence of other indicator sets for local partners (e.g. Vital Signs for health; APACs for police, etc) means that local partners can be diverted from focussing their attention on local outcomes. Any new national indicator set should be **locality, not council, based**.
- Despite the intention that the NIS would contain **outcome measures**, many of the indicators measure programme activity, processes and outputs. Whilst both types of indicators have their place, many of the issues that matter most to local people are not service-specific but relate to broader outcomes. In the future there should be a better balance of indicators focussing on cross-cutting outcomes and not driven by narrowly defined departmental priorities. Only by focussing on outcomes will indicators help reinforce partnership working locally.
- The indicators should **focus on what is important**. Indicators should genuinely reflect priority outcomes and not be a compendium of things Government feels



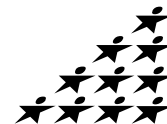
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are generally important. Many indicators have proved to be not relevant locally – some 53 indicators have only been selected in 5 or fewer LAAs.

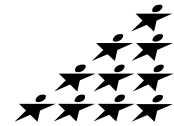
- This points to the potential scope for **reducing the size of the indicator set**. The current set is already too large. Whilst there are 188 indicators it is estimated that in practice there are actually around 261 indicators because some are “disaggregated” into different groups and others are “multi-part” containing several different indicators under one heading.
- There needs to be a **better balance** across the indicator set – colleagues refer to too many indicators relating, for example, to services for children and young people while other services receive little coverage e.g. adult social care (including mental health) economy and regeneration, culture, rural issues, etc. There are also too many perception indicators and many are not of good quality.
- The advent of the NIS has not led to a **reduction in the burden**. The first year has been challenging. Many of the indicators are new and complex, requiring considerably more effort to set up and maintain. If the burden is to reduce then the associated data returns must be stopped or reduced. Some indicators are costly to collect data for and these costs need to be factored in against the benefits of collection.
- There are a range of **technical problems** that need to be addressed in the future, for example:
 - many of the indicators have complex definitions that are not easy to understand or are ambiguous
 - data lags are a real barrier to driving improved performance. In some cases the data is only available from national sources annually or less frequently, in which case it is not useful in driving improvement or councils may have to seek proxy data
 - in some cases the spatial level at which the indicator is to be reported is at a higher level than that of an individual LSP – e.g. police force areas – and this calls into question how suitable the indicators are for local level reporting. Even where spatial reporting requirements are set at county council level many county councils cover large and diverse areas and this can cause difficulties drilling down to sub county council level, potentially limiting the usefulness of the indicators for shire districts
 - too many indicators are reliant on survey methodology to collect information to assess performance
 - changes to the indicator definitions during their life are disruptive and do not support comparisons over time – they should be avoided wherever possible.



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- The national indicator set was intended to represent the only measures on which central government would manage outcomes delivered by local government working alone or in partnership. But this is not the case. It is a consistent message that councils are still required to supply data to different government departments in different formats using different definitions. There are still too many requirements to report non NI data to government or to submit the same data twice. Much greater progress needs to be made to **reduce the data burdens facing localities**.
- **Going forward**, if there is to be a new set of indicators then, in addition to the comments outlined above:
 - We need to ensure an appropriate balance between continuity and consistency on one hand and learning and adjustment on the other. Some long term stability is essential if indicators are to be useful to and accepted by local government
 - The technical difficulties associated with a number of indicators demonstrate the challenges involved in finding good measures for complex outcomes. Councils have a great deal of experience in developing outcome measures and local authorities should be actively involved in the process of designing, developing and testing any future national indicator set
 - Because developing indicators is difficult it is important to start the thinking as early as possible
 - Developing a single national measure for complex outcomes may not always be possible or sensible. Government should accept that in some circumstances it may be preferable to allow local measures to be developed and to learn from and share developing practice.

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Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships

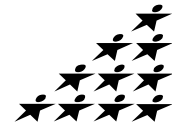
Summary

This paper provides Members with a summary of recent progress and activity across the nine RIEPs, including an update on the devolution of the Efficiency and Transformation fund, on outcomes from the last RIEP Member Forum, on the process for securing the release of year three funds to the RIEPs and on progress in taking forward support for smarter procurement.

Recommendations

This report is for information.

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Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships

Background

The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy (NIES) recognises the effectiveness of a sector led approach to improvement and the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) are a core part of this model. Both RIEP and Improvement Board members have previously agreed the importance of the RIEPs providing regular updates to reassure key stakeholders of their progress and to share good practice across the regions.

1. Key messages arising from RIEP progress updates:

The following provides a summary of the key messages from the most recent set of quarterly updates. The quarterly updates are available in full on request.

Efficiency

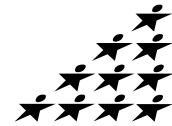
All RIEPs have increased their focus on supporting local authorities to promote and accelerate efficiency gains, with many looking ahead to a tighter fiscal climate ahead. Many RIEPs have built on the figures they reported at year end with some impressive efficiency savings reported in the second quarter:

- Gross cashable savings reported by the South East from April 08 September 09 are £27.9m, of which £6.9m has been reported in 2009-10 alone. This includes savings on waste and efficiencies from construction
- The West Midlands reports £9.5m savings from the start of CSR07 to June 2009 from its smarter procurement programme
- As at September, the East Midlands had released £3.2m from the Midlands Highways Alliance and £6.1m cashable savings from its Property Alliance as well as bringing new projects online in social care procurement.

Performance improvement

A recent analysis of the RIEP delivery plans indicated that RIEPs consistently invest around 50% of their funding in providing support to deliver ambitious LAAs, strengthening partnership working, offering bespoke support to individual authorities and preparing the sector for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). Examples of notable improvement support include:

- 'Picnic' support menu in the East enabling all authorities to access a variety of support of up to £10K
- A considerable investment in organisational development and partnership working in the North East (including the NE Excellent Manager Programme)



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- Launch of regional support programme prioritising partnerships and support for CAA and Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) in the North West.

Key achievements in the last quarter (June to Sept 09)

In this set of quarterly reports, each RIEP provided a key achievement which they had delivered in the last quarter:

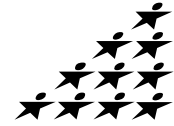
- In the **South West**, the partnership allocated £1.75m funding to ensure all sub-regions have access to support for **sector led 'Total Place' style pilots**
- The **North West** agreed a further package of support to an authority in difficulty to be funded from the savings released by the authority engaging with the RIEP in year one
- **Improvement East** launched an **efficiency package** including a new procurement hub, an overpayments recovery scheme and an invest to save scheme which offers authorities cash injections to pump prime efficiency projects
- Leader and Chief Executive support established across **Yorkshire and Humber** for a long term, regional, sector led **Improvement Framework**
- The launch of an ambitious **recruitment and retention programme** worth £1.5m in the **North East**
- In the **West Midlands**, the introduction of a £20K **support package for district councils in the recession** aimed at value for money, transformation or procurement
- The **London Procurement Strategy** setting out how **Capital Ambition** will support collaborative procurement across the capital
- In the **South East**, a new approach to **sub-regional funding** and revised **governance** with every board member being elected by their peers
- Refreshed **highways alliance project** in **East Midlands** now projecting £32.9m efficiencies over 5 years.

2. Efficiency and transformation (E and T) fund:

The E and T fund is a capital fund totalling £115m over three years. CLG has confirmed that the E and T allocation for 2009-10 will be devolved to the RIEPs to support projects on customer led transformation, efficiency, and system innovation (including a focus on preventative services). At the Solace Conference on 22nd October, Rosie Winterton announced that the total funds to be devolved for 2009-10 are £31.7m.

The latest quarterly progress updates included a specific update on how each RIEP is making use of their E and T allocation for 2008-9. Projects of note include:

- Six boroughs working together as a 'Service Transformation Academy' to improve business processes in London Boroughs



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- A regional e-recruitment system for Fire and Rescue Services being developed in the South West
- Support to improve access to health and well being services in Yorkshire and Humber.

3. RIEP Member Forum

Another successful meeting of the RIEP Member Forum was held on 13th October with a focus on sharing the RIEPs' most effective efficiency projects. A decision was taken to produce a casefile setting out the RIEP efficiency and procurement offer. A draft of which will be available for Members to review at the next meeting. We expect the Minister to attend the next meeting on 13th January, and IDeA national and regional peers will also be invited to build and consolidate links with lead peers.

4. Sign off of year three funds

Due to the timing of the general election next year, it is necessary to bring forward the process whereby the RIEPs submit 'annual reports' to the Minister and LGA lead Members to secure the release of funding for year three. Each RIEP will now produce an interim, 'light touch' report by January which will be collated by the RIEP Programme Office. We are in the process of arranging a Ministerial meeting in late January 2010 for lead Members and the Minister to discuss the progress evidenced in these 'interim' reports, with a view to agreeing the release of funding for year three in a timely manner.

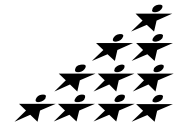
5. Procurement support

At its meeting in July, the Improvement Board commissioned a series of Guides on Procurement to be circulated to all elected Members. To date, Guides on Professional Services, Energy, ICT and Construction have been produced and circulated widely in First Magazine. The distribution of a Guide on Waste is due in First on 28th November, followed by the final Guide on Adult Social Care. Feedback on the Guides has been positive and Members may wish to consider commissioning a further set in the new year.

The Member Guides will be complemented by the production of a casefile setting out the RIEPs' offer of support on efficiency and procurement.

The IDeA's procurement programme has been commissioned and will include:

- Refresh of Member and Senior Manager pocket guides
- Councillors' workshops on 'Procurement in hard times'
- Procurement Challenge and tailored support for authorities
- Procurement "Champions" Conference
- Development of the online efficiency exchange



Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Implications for Wales

There are no implications for Wales.

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Total Place Update

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the Total Place initiative and informs members of the interim findings from the pilots which have been submitted to government in time for the pre-budget report (PBR).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Improvement Board:

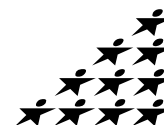
- Consider progress on the Total Place initiative and comment upon how they might wish to take the work of the Board forward in the light of the interim findings of the pilots.
- Support the development of further work around the potential role of Local Public Service Boards and how they might assist in advancing Total Place
- Support the inclusion of work streams arising from Total Place in the LGA Group Business Plan.

Action

Officers to action in accordance with the Board decisions.

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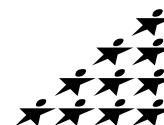
Background

1. The 13 pilot Total Place areas have completed their high level counting exercise and in-depth analysis of their chosen themed area is well underway.

An initial submission was made by each of the 13 Total Place pilots at the end of September. These submissions together with a covering report were then submitted to an inter-departmental high level officials group of civil servants. These findings are being used to inform the government's pre-budget report (PBR). Final reports from the 13 pilots are due in February 2010 and the findings from those will inform the government budget that will follow.

Emerging Findings from Total Place

2. The interim findings from the 13 pilots show that :
 - a. Numerous organisations are spending public money in the same area and often on the same things; for example in one of the pilot areas, 25 Social Housing providers for 19,000 homes with 47 funding streams for housing, 18 of which come from one funder.
 - b. There is significant overlap in management and administration costs with excessive waste on reporting & performance regimes.
 - c. The majority of money spent in places is under centralised control, more than almost any other western country, which leaves little or no room for innovation. For example, the amount of money spent in places varies, but for an average £7,000 of spend on public services in any one place only £350 is discretionary spending by councils.
 - d. Public services are not well organised around the needs of individual customers. Organisations tend to focus service delivery on their slice of need rather than dealing with the whole customer experience.



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3. Unsurprisingly, the key message from the pilots is that more of the same is not an appropriate way of working across the public sector. Whilst this is obvious and has long been the case, the need for change is brought even more to the fore because of the current fiscal situation. All pilots have pointed to four areas which require change at a central and local level in order to achieve a vast improvement in public services:
 - a. Funding (and any reductions in public sector funding) should be allocated by place, need and priority, rather than be institutionally or initiative driven.
 - b. The ring-fencing of money together with the target and report writing that goes with it needs to end. The current system is wasteful and often means that money is spent in the wrong areas. Localities need to have more of a say around local priorities and spending with local government playing a key lead role.
 - c. There needs to be a single performance framework across all the public services in any one place which focuses on outcomes, not inputs or unnecessary process.
 - d. Public service organisations need to redesign their services around the whole customer experience.

Current Activity

4. All of the pilots are pressing on with potential service re-design in their area and sharing their thinking with other authorities. In response to the Total Place report, the high level officials group at Whitehall has commissioned a number of workstreams where they need to look at how they might change. They are as follows:
 - a. Cross-cutting barriers to effective working from a Whitehall perspective.
Pilots involved: none. This is a Whitehall internal workings review.



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- b. Asset management.
Pilots involved: Worcestershire, Kent, Birmingham, Lewisham, and Cambridgeshire.
 - c. Services for children aged 0-5 and their families.
Pilots involved: Manchester, Croydon, and Coventry
 - d. Housing.
Pilots involved: Durham and others to be confirmed
 - e. Crime & reducing re-offending
Pilots involved Birmingham, Bradford, and Central Luton & Beds.
 - f. Drugs & Alcohol
Pilots involved: South Tyneside, Gateshead, Leicester, Leicestershire and Birmingham.
5. All of the Whitehall workstreams identified above will feed into the total place Ministerial meetings at which Cllr. David Parsons represents the LGA Group. The Ministerial Group met on Monday 9 November with the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government chairing the meeting and at which Ministers from all spending departments were represented. At that meeting Ministers reflected on the themed areas and acknowledged that there was a significant need for government to let go in terms of accountability frameworks and funding. The Secretary of State was keen to learn what reform proposals government would need to put in place to deliver more effective public services
- At the next meeting – for which the date is not yet set – they wish to focus on how government might get itself in a position to reduce significantly ring-fencing of funding, whilst having a clear line of accountability to individual places.
6. The initial findings from Total Place have strong resonance with the LGA group strategy, lobbying and general election messaging. Work flowing from Total Place must be incorporated within the Group Business Plan



Improvement Board

24 November 2009

which the Executive will be asked to approve in due course. The Improvement Board has already recognised the need to have a revised performance management framework, which significantly reduces current reporting burdens, and reflects performance of place. The Improvement Board in its “Freedom to Lead” call for evidence invites local authorities and partners to consider how a performance management framework that liberates public sector partners to work together might be designed. This is a key part of Improvement Board work this year and **members may wish to offer comments about this in their response to this report.**

7. If there is to be a clear line of sight from government of any political persuasion to public services in places, then it is apparent that there is a need for a robust governance model. LSPs are not universally the best way to provide a governance mechanism which can be accountable to government for delivery and performance. It is suggested that in order to respond to this area of work arising from Total Place, the thinking and proposals around local Public Service Boards or similar is developed **and brought back to members** after some other discussion with pilot areas.
8. In relation to the work area around customer service re-design and the skills needed in partnership working to respond to Total Place, the IDEA will in its part of the Group Business Plan reshape partnership support proposals that reflect the emerging findings from total place.
9. It is important that the Group Business Plan picks up many of the work streams arising from Total Place and **members are asked to endorse this approach.** In particular work needs to focus on governance, lobbying performance regimes and partnership support. The Total Place pilots need to be given further space to develop their thinking with a real focus on evidence and specifying the barriers at a national level that need to be removed for a new model of public services to work effectively. The Improvement Board will consider how best improvement activity can be focussed to support the findings from Total Place.

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Notes of Meeting and Decisions Taken

Improvement Board

10 September 2009

Present:

Chairman	Cllr David Parsons CBE (Leicestershire CC) (Con)
Vice-Chair	Cllr Jill Shortland (Somerset CC) (Lib Dem)
Deputy Chairs	Cllr Ann Lucas (Coventry) (Labour); Cllr Geoff Knight (Lancaster) Independent
Conservative	Cllr Peter Fleming (Sevenoaks DC); Cllr Jonathan Owen (East Riding of Yorkshire); Cllr Peter Goldsworthy (Chorley BC); Cllr Richard Stay (Central Bedfordshire); Cllr Andrew Povey (Surrey CC)
Labour	Cllr Christine Bowden (Newham LB); Cllr Tony McDermott (Halton BC);
Liberal Democrat	Cllr Edward Lord JP (Corporation of London); Cllr Sir David Williams CBE (Richmond upon Thames LB);
Apologies	Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE (IDeA) (Northumberland CC)

Councillor Jill Shortland (Vice-Chair) chaired the first part of the meeting as the Chairman was delayed due to travel difficulties.

The Vice-Chair welcomed both new and continuing members to the meeting.

1. Improvement Board – Membership 2009/2010

The Board **noted** its membership for 2009-2010.

2. Terms and Reference and Appointments

Terms of Reference

The Board voiced serious concerns about the new secretariat arrangements for the Improvement Board, whereby officer responsibility is remitted to the IDeA. The Board's concerns were particularly focussed on the implications of the new arrangements for the oversight of the central bodies, as set out in the Board's Terms of Reference.

Decision

Members **requested** that officers consider their comments on the new arrangements and **report back** to Members in due course.

Action

Officers to revisit the arrangements for the Improvement Board secretariat.

Jo Miller

Appointments

The Board was asked to appoint

- a representative to the Urban Commission Steering Committee,
- a member to lead on social inclusion and equalities issues; and
- a further member to lead on new European and International issues.

Decision

The Board **agreed** to appoint

- Cllr Tony McDermott (Halton) to the Urban Commission Steering Committee;
- Cllr Edward Lord JP to lead on social inclusion and equalities issues;
- Cllr David Parsons to lead on the new European and International issues Group.

Officers to confirm appointments in writing to the appointed members.

Member Support Officer

Councillor David Parsons, Chairman, chaired the meeting from this point.

3. Setting the agenda for the Improvement Board

Dennis Skinner, Regional Associate, National Co-ordination, IDeA, introduced a report which reviewed the progress made so far working across the LGA Group on the current performance management framework. The report invited members' views on the work programme for the coming year.

Members' comments included the following:

- National Indicator Descriptors (NIs) can be irrelevant to different types of local authority;
- NIs need to be made more flexible; they should be focussed on outcome and not process;

- some exploratory work needed to be carried out on the Government Offices' role in a devolved model;
- further work should be done in relation to a single inspectorate for place;
- efforts must be made to mobilise partners to get a consensus – this could be done through the RIEPs;
- there is a pilot (by partners in the West Midlands area) looking at how Asset Management can work – the pilot will report by the end of the year;
- any new duties and responsibilities imposed by central government must be funded by them from the start;
- concern was expressed that increasing financial pressures for the LGA Group over the coming year will have implications for the Board's work.

Decision

The Board

- **agreed** to lead a significant programme of work to develop an ambitious new model of sector led performance management, along the lines outlined in the paper at paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6;
- **noted** the draft forward work programme for the Board as set out in Appendix 3 to the Board.
- **requested** regular update reports on this on the status of the work programme.

Action

Officers to initiate the work programme in the light of members' comments.

Dennis Skinner

4. New Local Innovation Awards Scheme

Dame Denise Platt, Chair of the new Best Practice Advisory Panel, gave a presentation to members which set out her initial thinking on the future of the new local innovation awards scheme. Dame Denise's presentation slides can be accessed at www.lga.gov.uk. Dame Denise offered the Improvement Board the opportunity to contribute to the new scheme's development.

Members made a number of comments, which were noted by officers, including the following:

- consideration should be given to having just one Awards Ceremony, which would bring significant savings to the Scheme, particularly if the Ceremony was held outside London, where costs are far too high;

- A new ‘Dragon’s Den’ style challenge process was a good idea but judges should include representatives drawn from local communities, eg. using a member of the Youth Parliament for judging the “Keeping Children and Young People” award and using a local community safety champion for judging the “policing our communities award”;
- Some of the themes should be retitled, some of the present titles do not “trip off the tongue” eg the final two themes on p.31;
- Some members felt that the new scheme needs to be a radical enough change for it to work.

Decision

The Improvement Board

- **noted** Dame Denise Platt’s presentation;
- **requested** that a report on progress be brought back to the Board, early in the new year.
- **agreed** to invite Dame Denise to a future meeting of the RIEPS National Forum.

Action

Officers to submit a progress report to a future meeting of the Board.

Ruby Dixon

The Chairman thanked Dame Denise Platt for her presentation.

5. Total Place

The Board received a report which updated them on the Total Place initiative, including progress in each of the pilot areas. The report also provided members with some early thoughts on the outline submission from the LGA to the Pre-Budget report (PBR).

Phil Swann, the programme lead for Dorset, Poole & Bournemouth (Older people’s services) and Kim Curry, Strategic Director, representing Leicester & Leicestershire (Alcohol & drug abuse) attended the meeting to talk to the Board about the emerging issues from their perspective.

Comments on the presentation and outline submission to the Pre-Budget Report included the following:

- concern was expressed about what can actually be delivered in the timescales set down by government;
- any savings generated as a result of this exercise should come with a “health warning”;

- the importance of capturing nationally what is already being done in the sector on the various themes;
- the need to engage with communities on the project;
- the cost of partnerships and the need to invest at the outset.
- it must be made clear to Government that this exercise should not just be about cutting budgets.

Decision

The Board

- **noted** the progress on the Total Place Initiative;
- **agreed** that the Total Place Submission to the PBR be accepted by the Chairman of the Improvement Board, in consultation with the other lead Members of the Board, and used to inform the LGA's position.

Action

John Atkinson

6. Procurement Update

Dennis Skinner, Regional Associate, National Co-ordination, introduced a report which updated the Board on progress in implementing the procurement work programme agreed at the last meeting. It also updated the Board on the work programme undertaken by the European & International Unit and Brussels Office on emerging EU rules and regulations affecting procurement.

The Board **noted**

- progress in implementing the work programme set out in paragraphs 2 to 6 of the report;
- the LGA European and International Unit work programme, set out in paragraphs 8-17 of the report, and endorses the highlighted actions.

Action

Officers to implement the work programme as identified.

Keith Beaumont

Officers to engage with the new European Parliament and European Commission On EU procurement and with relevant Whitehall departments.

**Dominic Rowles
(Brussels Office)**

7. Note of Decisions taken at the last meeting on 21 July 2009

The Board **agreed** the note of its last meeting.

8. Any Other Business

Equalities and Social Inclusion representation

Councillor Edward Lord JP, Corporation London, voiced his concerns that, despite being appointed as the Improvement Board representative on equalities and social inclusion issues each year for the past five years, he has not yet been approached to contribute to any issues in this area or to attend any meetings. Councillor Lord added that, to his knowledge, no other LGA equalities and social inclusion representative has been approached either.

In this context, Councillor Lord raised the issue of the Equalities Standard for Local Government which is about to become a generic framework for local authorities to mainstream and effectively audit equality across service areas and through which legal obligations to anti-discrimination laws can be met. Councillor Lord said that the issues of the framework had not been raised at any meeting of the LGA's member structures.

Paul Roberts, Executive Director, IDeA undertook to look into this issue and report back.

Paul Roberts

City centre

Welcome! Manchester's compact city centre contains lots to do in a small space. To help, we've colour coded the city. Explore and enjoy!

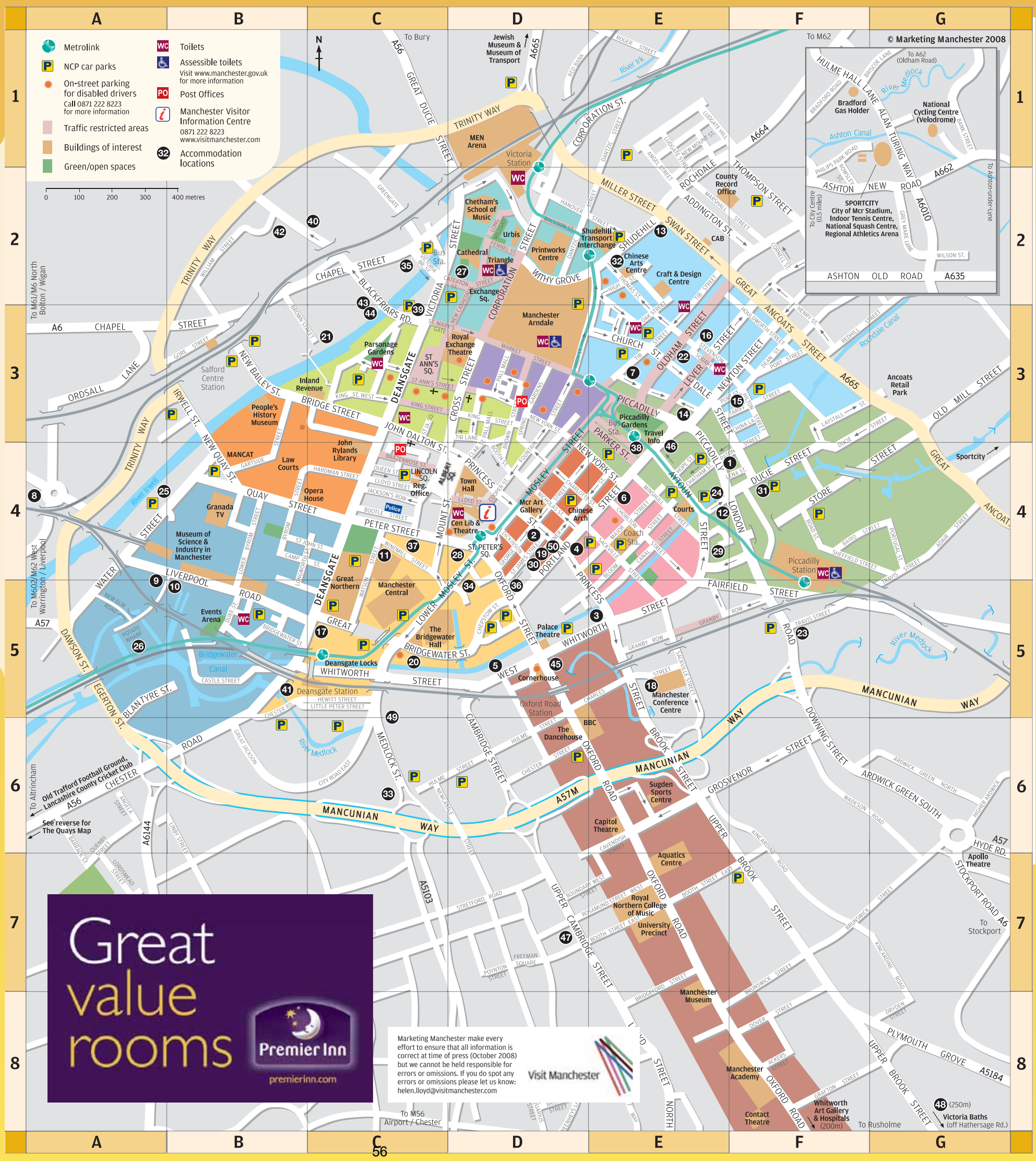
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- Chinatown**
Made up of oriental businesses including Chinese, Thai, Japanese and Korean restaurants.
- Exchange Square & New Cathedral Street**
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- Northern Quarter**
Manchester's creative, urban heart with independent fashion stores, record shops and cafés.
- Piccadilly**
The main gateway into Manchester, with Piccadilly train station and Piccadilly Gardens.
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The place to escape from the hustle and bustle of city life with waterside pubs and bars.
- The Gay Village**
Unique atmosphere with restaurants, bars and clubs around the vibrant heart of Canal Street.
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