

Note of Meeting and Decisions Taken

Improvement Board

20 July 2010

Present:

Chairman	Cllr David Parsons CBE (Leicestershire CC) (Con)
Vice Chair	
Deputy Chair	Cllr Geoff Knight (Lancaster CC) (Independent)
Conservative	Cllr Peter Fleming (Sevenoaks DC); Cllr Peter Goldsworthy (Chorley BC); Cllr Jonathan Owen (East Riding of Yorkshire); Cllr Richard Stay (Central Bedfordshire)
Labour	Cllr Tony McDermott (Halton BC);
Liberal Democrat	Cllr Sir David Williams CBE (Richmond upon Thames LB).
Apologies	Cllr Edward Lord JP (Corporation of London); Cllr Ann Lucas (Coventry); Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE (LGID) (Northumberland CC); Cllr Jill Shortland (Somerset CC); Cllr Andrew Povey (Surrey CC);
Substitute/Observer	Cllr Peter Thompson (Hounslow); Cllr John Commons (Manchester City); Cllr Tim Cheetham (Barnsley MBC)

1. Improvement Productivity and Localism

Rob Whiteman, Managing Director, Local Government Improvement and Development, gave a presentation on Localism, Improvement and Efficiency. The presentation outlined the LG Group offer to the new coalition government that built on the work the LGA Improvement Board led over the last year on Total Place, and the Freedom to Lead campaign. As part of this offer, the LGA Executive has endorsed proposals for devolved place based budgets. Paul Raynes, Programme Director, updated the Board on progress and reported that the initial response from the Treasury was positive and the Government was willing to consider the idea of place based budgets as part of the Spending Review process. He introduced a tabled paper that analysed responses from 40 authorities who had responded to our request for outline proposals for place based budgets in their areas. These responses overwhelmingly endorsed the Group's ambitious offer and would be used to support the Group's submission to the Spending Review.

The following points were made in discussion:

- We need to highlight the significant savings that can be achieved and take advantage of the government's current receptiveness to our ideas;
- We need to put the customers of public services at the heart of these proposals to identify the benefits for them;

- We must demonstrate the case to Departmental Secretaries of State, including Department of Work and Pensions;
- Local Government must have a leading commissioning role for services, including health.

Rob Whiteman then continued his presentation including the proposed timeline for place based budget prototypes supported by a programme of place based productivity. Nine workstreams are being established to support the roll out of place based productivity. He also outlined the other key element of the LG Group offer for a new model of self-regulation and self improvement. In order to manage risk and reduce inspection burdens, a robust and credible self assessment process is needed, but this should not become burdensome.

The following points were made in discussion:

- External assurance is important for child and adult safeguarding;
- Any system of self improvement needs to be credible and robust;
- There was a need to have a more flexible approach to use of auditors.

Decisions

The Board **noted** the report and presentation.

Actions

- The September Board meeting would focus on the place based productivity programme and options for the role of the LG Group in a sector owned approach to regulation and improvement. **Dennis Skinner**
- Regular updates on our submission to the spending review and place based budgets to be emailed to the Board Office Holders **Paul Raynes**
- E-mail presentation slides to the Board **Jenny Day**

2. New Governance Arrangements and the Improvement Programme Plan 2010-11

Dennis Skinner, Regional Associate, LG Improvement and Development, presented this report which outlined the changes being made to strengthen the political governance of the LG Group. The report included a suggested terms of reference for the Improvement Board, and a draft programme plan for the Board. Members discussed the work strands detailed in the programme plan, and requested further clarification around the roles and responsibilities of LG Leadership and LG Improvement and Development, and about the role of the LGA Improvement Programme Board in relation to LG Improvement and Development. Rob Whiteman informed the Board that in part, the roles of the LG Leadership and LG Improvement and Development would be defined by the level of top slice funding they receive.

Decisions

- The Board **noted** the report and LG Group Programme Plan for Improvement;
- Members **agreed** to invite Directors (excluding CLG) appointed to the Local Government Improvement and Development Company Board to attend the Improvement Programme Board as advisory, non-voting, members;
- The Board **agreed** that another Improvement Board away day should be held, and members suggested that the following items could be on the agenda :
 - ways of working for the new Improvement Programme Board
 - Improvement Programme Plan
 - roles and responsibilities of the organisations within the Local Government Group both individually, and in relation to each other
- The Board **agreed** that **Cllrs Peter Fleming, Tim Cheetham and John Commons** should be involved in the planning and arrangements for the Improvement Conference in March 2011.

Actions

- Invite Directors of the LG Improvement and Development Company Board to attend future Improvement Programme Board meetings
Dennis Skinner
- Make arrangements for an Improvement Programme Board away day
Dennis Skinner
- Update conference and events with names of councillors to be involved in planning the Improvement Conference in March 2011.
Liz Hobson

3. Data and Digital Policy

Tim Allen, Programme Director, LGAAR, presented this report which proposed an agenda for Local Government Group activity on data and digital policy and practice, with a formal programme managed approach with political oversight and guidance. The agenda for data and digital policy has so far been driven by central government, but we now have an opportunity to create a consistent sector led agenda that has political oversight and input. The Board agreed that a strong strategy was needed to take this work forward, and suggested that the task group could also consider how to improve the difficulties associated with exchanging information between different agencies.

Decision

- The Improvement Board **agreed** that **Cllrs David Williams, Richard Stay and Tim Cheetham** could be nominated to the Task Group for Data and Digital Policy and Practice

Actions

- Officers to take this work forward (as set out in paragraphs 4 and 6 of the report), set up and organise the task group, and provide update reports to the Improvement Board.

Tim Allen

4. Update Report

Keith Beaumont, Programme Manager, LG Improvement and Development, provided an update on Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs). Seminars at the annual conference had been well attended with many opportunities for sharing good practice. The Board discussed the need for further information about the long term future of RIEPs.

Decisions

- The Board noted the update report

Actions

- Provide a report on the future of RIEPs for the November Board meeting
Dennis Skinner

5. Note of the last meeting

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

Any other Business

Big Society

The Board noted the report on the Big Society which was tabled at the meeting for information and agreed that officers should pursue the lobbying points outlined with government officials.

Standards Board

The Board held a short discussion seeking clarification about the abolition of the Standards Board for England.

Actions

- Produce a letter of clarification for local authorities about the abolition of the Standards Board for England

Dennis Skinner

Date of next meeting: Thursday 09 September 11:00, Local Government House