

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LG Group Improvement Board
Date and time: 15.00, 17 November 2010
Venue: City Marketing Suite, City of London

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	David Parsons CBE	Leicestershire CC
Vice Chair	Jill Shortland	Somerset CC
Members	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
	Peter Goldsworthy	Chorley BC
	Dr Andrew Povey	Surrey CC
	Tony McDermott	Halton BC
	Tim Cheetham	Central Bedfordshire
	Helen Holland	Halton BC
	Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
	Edward Lord JP	Corporation of London
Substitutes	Russell Roberts (Labour Group)	Rhonda Cynon Taff CBC
	Clarence Barrett (Independent Group)	Havering LB
In attendance	Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest
	Philip Selwood	Energy Saving Trust (LGID Board Member)
Apologies	Ruth Cadbury (Deputy Chair)	Hounslow LB
	Jeremy Webb (Deputy Chair)	East Lindsey DC
	Robert Gordon	Hertfordshire CC
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire

Officers: Rob Whiteman, Dennis Skinner, Helen Platts (LGID); John Ransford, Nick Easton, Liz Hobson, Paul Johnston (LGA)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1 LG Group Business Plan

Helen Platts, Strategic Business Adviser, LGID, introduced the report which set out the process for agreeing the LG Group business plan for 2011/12. It was noted that there was a significant reduction of 38% in Revenue Support Grant funding over the next four years and that there was pressure on other sources of funding including the membership subscription.

Members asked whether the LG Group would be able, despite funding restrictions, to increase areas of activity that the Board considered were most important. Officers said that the LG Group, more than ever, would have to prioritise those activities that member councils wanted the Group to pursue.

Members discussed LGA member subscriptions and said that a small number were on notice to leave membership of the Association. Members said that the RSG Prospectus was an important document in demonstrating the value of membership.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed that a further item on the LG Group Business Plan be brought forward to the January Board agenda.

Action

Officers to progress work on the LG Group Business Plan for 2011 / 12 and to update Members on progress at the January Board meeting.

2 The abolition of the Audit Commission

Rob Whiteman, Managing Director LGID, introduced the report, saying that the Government had recently announced plans to disband the Audit Commission, which would impact on auditing arrangements for local authorities. The intention was to have new arrangements in place for auditing local public bodies in England by 2012/13 and there were a number of issues to be considered, including the cost implications for councils in procuring audit.

Members said that further efforts needed to be made to engage councils in this transition process.

Different opinions were expressed about proposals for councils to be able to appoint their own auditors. On the one hand this was welcomed as part of the devolution agenda and it was felt that greater competition could lead to lower fees. On the other hand it could potentially jeopardise auditors' independence and lead to higher costs for some councils, e.g. smaller councils in remote locations.

Decision

Members agreed that officers further explore the practical issues involved in the abolition of the Audit Commission in more detail with CLG, the Audit Commission and the National Audit Office.

Action

Officers to further explore those practical issues and report to the Board in due course.

3 Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships

Dennis Skinner, National Co-ordinator, Regional Associates, introduced the report, noting that work was underway to assess how the LG Group could best support improvement and efficiency at a local and regional level at the end of the current financial year.

Members said that it was important to engage with Council Leaders to ensure that any proposed way forward reflected Councils' preferences.

Decision

Member noted the report

4 Notes of last meeting and actions arising

The note of the last meeting was agreed as a correct record.