

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LG Group Improvement Programme Board
Date and time: Tuesday 19 July 2011, 11.00am
Venue: Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	David Parsons CBE	Leicestershire CC
Vice chair	Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
Deputy chair	Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LB
Members	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
	Peter Goldsworthy	Chorley BC
	Tony McDermott	Halton BC
	Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
	Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Substitutes	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
In attendance	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest DC
	Philip Selwood	LGID Board Member
	Richard Priestman	LGID Board Member
Apologies	Jeremy Webb (Deputy Chair)	East Lindsey DC
	Robert Gordon	Hertfordshire CC
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire
	Dr Andrew Povey	Surrey CC

Officers: Rob Whiteman, Dennis Skinner, Rachel Litherland, Nick Easton, Liz Hobson, Paul Johnston (all LG Group)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1 Knowledge Hub

The Board received a presentation from Sarah Jennings, LG Group, on the Group's work in developing the Knowledge Hub tool. The presentation is available to view via <http://www.local.gov.uk/agendas1>

Members said that officers had to ensure that the Knowledge Hub was user-friendly to encourage uptake by Councillors and officers not currently engaged with online networking applications.

Members suggested that member development officers should be made aware of Knowledge Hub and that member peers could be well placed to use and test it. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Board to engage with the development and roll-out of Knowledge Hub through member champions.

Decision

Members noted progress on the Knowledge Hub, and agreed that Cllr Peter Fleming and Cllr Tim Cheetham would serve as Member Champions for the tool.

Action

Officers to liaise with Cllrs Fleming and Cheetham on their champion role.

2 Taking the Lead – local government self regulation and improvement

Members noted the good progress that had been made to develop and deliver the seven point support offer and provided feedback on the road shows that they had attended.

Members questioned whether in the current media climate, Government would be less supportive of proposals that involved greater "self regulation". Members suggested that, within the terminology for Taking the Lead proposals, greater emphasis should be placed on bolstering local accountability.

Members asked whether there was sufficient intelligence available on Councils' performance to make self regulation workable. Officers said that Principal Advisors in the LG Group and Member Peers were able to secure such intelligence. Where concerns existed, these were reported to the Performance Support Panel.

Despite concerns over intelligence sharing and Government direction, Members said that Councils had shown an appetite for greater self regulation and that it was important to make these proposals work.

Decision

Members noted progress on Taking the Lead;

Members asked that the terminology for the proposals be re-examined.

Members agreed the next steps in paragraph 23.

Action

Officers to finalise and promote take up of the support tools, and to re-examine the terminology for the proposals.

3 Sector Self-Regulation Advisory Board

Members received a presentation from Steve Freer, Chairman of the independent Sector Self-Regulation Advisory Board on the remit and current activities of the Board.

In terms of performance, Steve questioned whether it was still appropriate to expect continuous improvement in an age of austerity and asked whether the emphasis should be more about damage limitation. In this context, Steve stressed the importance that the Board attached to the LG Group strengthening arrangements to understand performance.

Members said that this could build on the work already undertaken by other Group structures, such as the Performance Support Panel, and suggested that senior officers and Members within the LG Group liaise with Advisory Board Members on the work already undertaken by the Group.

Members asked how the membership of the Advisory Board had been established, and to whom it was intended that the Advisory Board would report. Officers said that the Advisory Board had been set up to link views of professional associations into proposals around greater sector self-regulation, to obtain advice from a wider group of stakeholders and to establish the LG Group's leadership role in this area.

Decision

Members received the report, and asked for further liaison between Group officers and Advisory Board Members to ensure arrangements were strengthened.

Action

Officers to liaise with Members of the Advisory Board.

4 Creative Councils Programme

Members welcomed progress to date on the Creative Councils Programme, and thanked LG Group staff, particularly Ruby Dixon, who was leaving the Group and had worked on all the recent Innovation programmes.

Officers from NESTA said that the partnership between NESTA and the Group would allow dissemination of the programme's benefits to member authorities.

Decision

Members noted the Group's forward work programme on Creative Councils and looked forward to receiving further updates at future meetings.

5 Notes of last meeting and actions arising

Members agreed the note of the last meeting as a correct record, and noted the actions arising.

Members paid tribute to Cllr David Parsons CBE for his chairmanship of the Board, and the work he had undertaken on behalf of the Board in that capacity.

Members congratulated Rob Whiteman on his appointment as



Chief Executive of the UK Border Agency and expressed their appreciation for the work he had done for the Board and his leadership of LGID.

Members thanked Liz Hobson for her work as Business Manager for the Improvement Board, and wished her well in her new role within the LG Group.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 8 September 2011