

LGG Improvement Programme Board – 19 July 2011

Taking the Lead – update

Taking the Lead – our 7 point offer	What we have done - and next steps
<p>1. Local accountability tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We will strengthen our online guidance to provide a package of support showing how new and existing tools can be brought together to provide regular feedback to local people ➤ We will develop and make available, free of charge, a new web-based local assessment tool that helps councils work with local people, partners and communities to get a shared assessment of current performance ➤ We will also work with a number of councils to pilot new ways of gathering information about citizens' views of the services that councils provide in order to help councils continue to make improvements that are meeting the needs of citizens and users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Online guidance. We have strengthened the online guidance and will raise its profile on the new LG Group website ➤ The online guidance includes a whole section on local self-assessment providing advice and examples for local authorities to make use of. We will strengthen the accompanying guidance with advice about capturing citizen views and bringing them together in a coherent way. We will also bring together self assessment tools in other services areas so that councils can explore the inter-linkages. ➤ Piloting new ways. We will explore the opportunities new technologies create (particularly via social networks) for developing new ways of gathering intelligence about citizen's views of local services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Working with the Centre for Public Scrutiny we will offer, subject to resources and the level of need identified by the sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free or subsidised follow-up support from CfPS to authorities where the effectiveness of member challenge is identified as a weakness in a peer challenge ○ Free or subsidised access to wider governance improvement support using CfPs Accountability Charter and moderated self-assessment 	<p>We have agreed a programme for 2011-12 with CfPS to maintain free access for all authorities to regular (10 pa) updates, briefings (at least 12 pa), helpdesk and on-line resources. CfPS will also continue to support the National Overview and Scrutiny Forum, made up of representatives from all regional scrutiny networks to enable sharing of good practice and two-way information flows.</p> <p>The 3 points highlighted in Taking the Lead will be met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 6 free days of direct scrutiny support to authorities nominated for this through LGG engagement (costs met by CfPS)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A programme of free or subsidised events, working with CfPs to help key local scrutiny chairs and other members develop their skills and capacity to provide effective challenge to performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Free use of the Accountability Works for You framework (new name for the Charter) for up to 6 authorities identified by LGG as having governance problems (costs shared between LGID and CfPS) ➤ CfPS-run workshops at all the regional Taking the Lead events in the summer and autumn, and CfPS inputs at regional scrutiny networks as requested by them. CfPS is also running a master class session on Accountability Works for You at LGG Conference. <p>CfPS will also provide support and briefings to LGG Peers, Advisers and others to ensure they are up to date with the latest information and that the Peer Challenge and other offers reflect scrutiny best practice – discussions to set this up have already been held between relevant LGG and CfPS officers.</p>
<p>2. Peer Challenge</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A free of charge peer challenge over the three year period starting in April 2011. The focus of the challenge will be worked up with each authority individually and will be flexible to councils’ needs. However we expect they will all have some focus on corporate capacity and leadership because we know these are key factors in council performance and improvement ➤ In addition we will continue to offer shorter, sharper more subject-specific challenges. It will not be possible for these to be free but the price will be kept to a minimum. 	<p>Local Government: We have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continued to promote the peer challenge offer widely through a range of mechanisms and at several events and meetings ➤ Continued to develop the detailed methodology and the approach to peer management and deployment to support it with the sector – in meetings with lead national and regional member peers and a sounding board of council chief executives ➤ Delivery. The Peer Support Team is in discussion with a number of upper tier and district authorities and are at various stages of planning their peer challenge. Initial peer challenges are being delivered in July and will test out the proposed methodology across a range of scenarios and types of authorities - e.g. shared management, county and district, etc. Feedback so far has been very positive. ➤ A range of subject specific peer challenges have been delivered and are planned for 2011/12 <p>Fire & Rescue Services:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) Peer Challenge offer is being revised in partnership between the LG Group and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) through a new Member led peer challenge working group established by the Fire Services Management Committee ➤ The new FRS peer challenge will be launched in the Autumn 2011 with several Fire & Rescue Services already lined up to test the methodology.
<p>3 Peer Support</p>	
<p>We are offering up to five days of free member peer support for all councils undergoing a change of control</p>	<p>Lead and regional lead peers have contacted all councils/leaders eligible for the offer of support. Engagement with individual councils and members is at various stages, with peer support currently being delivered in several councils and discussions ongoing in others.</p>
<p>4. Knowledge Hub</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We know that councils want to learn from each other but find it difficult to find the time or find the right information. Therefore we are investing on behalf of the sector in a new web-based service that will create a single window to improvement in local government. It will bring people together in one place online to share ideas, knowledge and information. Users will be able to find peers and experts who share their interests, to help each other and develop how they work. It will be a much more coordinated and dynamic way of using social media. 	<p>The Knowledge Hub forms part of our new integrated online offer that incorporates LG Inform, ESD toolkit and the website. The new LG Group website - www.local.gov.uk – is the first element of this suite of tools and is online now.</p> <p>We are about to launch Knowledge Hub, a new social networking and data visualisation system for local authorities. It will revolutionise knowledge sharing between peers with a focus on the individual and their specialist networks. From officers to councillors and managers to policy people, it will help with personal and professional development through shared expertise and experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The first limited version of this is live now and the system will be rolled out over the coming months until a complete system, including data comparison and analysis tools, is available towards the end of the year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A full 'beta' version will be released at the end of July 2011. At this point, migration of existing Communities of Practice will commence. ➤ A more enhanced version will be released in early August. This will extend the social media functionality and incorporate more sophisticated search/discover/find elements. ➤ By mid-September, the integration of data and applications (eg LG Inform) will commence, with a full stable release expected in October [exact timings are subject to more detailed technical planning.]
5. Data and Transparency	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We are creating a free of charge place within Knowledge Hub for councils to lodge and access data in an open source environment to help them understand their performance and productivity ➤ For councils who want the service it will also provide a facility and structure to share and compare key data for selective, intelligent comparison with similar or contrasting councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A prototype of a new data service, known as Local Government Group Inform (LG Inform) was launched at the LG Group Annual Conference. This has been developed in consultation with the sector and the next phase will involve further consultation to ensure it remains sector-led. Looking ahead, elements such as benchmarking, to allow authorities to share in-year or early sight data, will be established over the next period (autumn/winter). ➤ The integration of LG Inform with the Knowledge Hub, which will link the data with other resources and sources of information on performance and productivity, will also take place later in the year. ➤ To access the LG Inform prototype, please register at www.local.gov.uk/lginform. To comment on it, please contact juliet.whitworth@local.gov.uk or use the feedback button within LG Inform.
6. Leadership support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We will continue to provide leadership support for our political leaders and we will be making available one subsidised place for every council for each of the 	<p>We have put in place a cohesive programme to support political leadership development combining the direct provision of national development programmes and a range of materials and approaches</p>

<p>next three years on one of our main programmes commissioned from the market.</p>	<p>to support in-house development. All Councils are being encouraged to take up the offer of a subsidised place on one of our political leadership programmes.</p>
<p>7. Learning and support networks</p>	
<p>➤ We will support networks of officers and councillors at national and sub-national levels, working with other sub-national groupings of councils and the relevant professional associations to share good practice and to provide timely support</p>	<p>This area is in a state of flux as the new approaches to assessment and improvement in adults and children’s services stimulate new regional networks. We are exploring with RIEPs, Principal Advisers and the professional associations how we might rationalise and support these arrangements.</p>
<p>OTHER</p>	
<p>Managing the risk of underperformance</p>	
<p>➤ The LG Group Improvement Programme Board, working with the other programme boards at the LG Group, will maintain an overview of the performance of the sector.</p> <p>➤ We will work with councils to find a light touch way to gather intelligence which will be used to stimulate discussions with councils about improvement support</p> <p>➤ The LG Group will meet the remaining regulators and government to receive information about the performance of the sector from their perspective</p>	<p>We are exploring how we can strengthen our current approach to identifying councils facing performance challenges by exploiting the opportunities provided by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Our strengthened team of Principal advisers ➤ The on-going information LG Inform will provide and ➤ Links to other parts of the sector through the independent Advisory Board <p>Following discussions with DCLG officials, CEXs, SOLACE and others in May we are also working with DCLG to create a mechanism for sharing intelligence across other Government Departments and the Inspectorates.</p>