

Item 4

Creative Councils – update

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report updates the Board on progress with the Creative Councils innovation programme, a collaboration between the LG Group and the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA).

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the update and the Group's forward work programme on Creative Councils.

Action

Officers to reflect members' suggestions in the design and delivery of future support to councils, communications and lobbying activity derived from the Creative Councils programme.

Contact officers: Ruby Dixon and Dennis Skinner

Phone no: 0207 664 3017

E-mail: Ruby.dixon@local.gov.uk; Dennis.skinner@lga.gov.uk

Item 4

Creative Councils - update

Background

1. Creative Councils is a new programme from NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), working with the Local Government (LG) Group, to support councils to develop and implement radical innovations that meet the challenges of tomorrow.
2. The ambition over the next two years is to work with a small group of creative, pioneering councils and their partners throughout England and Wales. We will develop, implement and spread transformational new approaches to meeting some of the biggest medium and long-term challenges facing communities and local services.
3. The focus of the programme will be on councils prepared to ask fundamentally different questions. For example, 'how can we support older people to live well' instead of 'how can we deliver better services to older people at lower cost'.
4. Our aim is both to provide practical support to the councils and their partners involved in the programme to successfully develop and implement their ideas, and to generate learning, practical models and inspiration that can be applied throughout local government.

The Programme

5. The programme was launched on 14 April with a call for councils to submit ideas for addressing some of the biggest medium and long-term challenges facing communities and local services. At the submission deadline on 20 June, 136 councils had offered up innovative ideas. The applicants cover all political administrations, regions, a good geographical spread, and different types of councils.
6. This is a key programme that can help the Group to support councils to radically transform the way they lead their communities, which can move the sector beyond improvement to innovative solutions to local problems. There are natural synergies between the Group's wider work on: productivity; community budgets, leadership, data-sharing and transparency, peer support and leadership. The level of uptake of ideas across a whole range strategic and service priorities, indicates that councils have the appetite for change and they see real value in participating in this programme.

Item 4

7. By the end of July we will select up to twenty of the most promising ideas that will receive financial and non-financial support to develop their thinking and establish the potential to spread to other areas. The support will include a programme of events, workshops and support to help the councils deliver their vision.
8. In autumn 2011, we will select the five ideas with the highest potential to receive further tailored support to implement their innovation.
9. A Steering Group has been established to monitor, develop and oversee the work of the Programme at a high level. The Group will include equal members of LG Group and NESTA and other representatives to be agreed. Councillor Fleming is the Improvement Board's representative on the Creative Councils Steering Group.
10. Staff from LG Group and NESTA are in the process of completing the assessment of all the applications at the time of finalising this report.
11. The applicants to receive funding and support as part of the Programme, and the amount and type of support, shall be decided by a Selection Panel consisting of representatives from LG Group and NESTA.
12. As part of a wider context of liberalisation of public services, the programme also provides access to suppliers with expertise of the private, voluntary and social enterprise sectors, through a framework of specialist suppliers. The programme also enables councils to work with other councils in clustered or related services.

Conclusion

13. This is a programme developed with, by and for councils and their partners. It has been created in response to the concerns of councils, and will be adapted in response to the ideas that emerge and the authorities and partners that come forward.
14. Throughout the programme we will share learning in real-time, providing valuable resources and insights that can be applied throughout local government.
15. Councils are being asked to deliver more and better for less whilst achieving cuts of 30% of the next four years. Councils told us they need the space to

Item 4

create and innovate. Creative Councils provides the support, facilitation and space to take risks in pursuing radical ideas.

Financial Implications

16. NESTA has agreed to provide £2m as their contribution to the Creative Councils programme. This includes £250,000 to support the work in Scotland. The LGID Company Board agreed at its meeting in March 2011 to set aside a sum of £750,000 from reserves to support the programme in 2011/12.