

## Note of decisions taken and actions required

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**Title:** Improvement Programme Board

**Date and time:** Tuesday, 8 November 2011, 11.00am

**Venue:** Local Government House

**Item 7**

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### Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Deputy-chairman	Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LB
Members	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Judith Blake	Leeds City
	Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
	Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
	William Nunn	Breckland DC
	Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
Substitutes	Tony Jackson	East Hertfordshire
	Peter Britcliffe	Hyndburn DC
	Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire
	Apu Bagchi	Bedford Council
	Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
Apologies	Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
	Michael White	Havering LB
	Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
	Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
	Jeremy Webb	East Lindsey DC
Observers/Other attendees	Philip Sellwood, Chief Executive	Energy Savings Trust
	Martin Smith, Chief Executive,	Ealing LB
	Tim Ellis, Programme Management	Kensington & Chelsea RB
	Graeme McDonald	SOLACE
LGA Officers	Dennis Skinner, Jo Miller, Brian Reynolds, Pascoe Sawyers.	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman, welcomed members, observers and officers to the meeting and informed the Board of apologies received. Cllr Fleming also informed members that the agenda was organised according to the themes agreed at the last meeting.

**1. Business Plan Priorities for 2011-2012: 6 month update**

The Chairman introduced a report which provided the Board with a mid financial year update of the progress on the LGA's overall Business Plan that is relevant to the work of the Programme Board. A summary of progress would be forwarded to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel for their meeting in December 2011, as part of the LGA's performance monitoring arrangements.

The Board had a short discussion and concurred that the six month report was very useful.

Cllr Helen Holland requested that Board members be provided with details of any regional events that are relevant to the work of the Board.

Decision

*The Improvement Programme Board **noted** progress made against the Improvement Programme Board's 2011-2012 business plan targets as set out and **agreed** Appendix 1.*

Action

Officers to provide Improvement Programme Board members with details of relevant regional events.

**Dennis Skinner**

**2. Leadership and Localism – progress report**

Cllr Richard Stay, introduced a report which updated Board members on the LGA Leadership offer. Cllr Stay gave a short presentation which took members through the background and the current work programme. Cllr Stay was supported by Pascoe Sawyers, Principal Adviser, Leadership and Localism.

Following the presentation members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers. Cllr Stay and Pascoe Sawyers responded to a number of questions relating to issues including:

- following restructuring, the ability of the Association to continue to provide an extensive Leadership offer, including induction for new councillors;
- the recognition and accreditation of Leadership programmes;
- how many councillors, who have participated in Leadership programmes, are currently in active leadership roles and, similarly, how many Chief Executives are still in post;
- Members questioned whether the LGA should consider a Communications Peer review, as good communications are essential to the delivery of improved support to councils;
- the need for clarity in the LGA offer to the sector and a more deliberate connection between the training provided and the issues being dealt with.

### Decision

#### *The Board*

- ***noted*** the Leadership and Localism team's programme of work and the progress that has been made in the delivery of the programme to date;
- ***asked*** that their comments be taken into account in the development of the programme.

### Action

Officers to continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and members' comments.

**Pascoe  
Sawyers**

### **3 (a) Productivity Programme – *Better with Less* – Programme Update**

Brian Reynolds, Policy and Development - Productivity, introduced a report which updated members on the progress made on the Productivity Programme and set out the LGA's offer to councils for Board approval.

With regard to the Waste Management Pioneers Programme

Brian Reynolds informed members that he will have further to report on “flush waste” in due course.

Brian also reported that the Department of Health had the previous week pledged £300,000 in match-funding for councils seeking external support in efficiency in adult social care.

Members congratulated officers on a very good report and made some detailed comments which were noted by officers.

### Decisions

#### *The Board **agreed***

- *the direction of the Productivity Programme as set out in the report;*
- *the Programme strap-line and working definition of productivity as delivering ‘**better with less**’;*
- *that a business case for a national buying agency for goods and services be developed;*
- *the broad delivery plan set out at Appendix 1 of the report.*

### Action

Officers to take forward in accordance with the decisions set out above.

**Brian Reynolds**

### **3(b) Fighting Fraud Locally [CONFIDENTIAL]**

The latest embargoed copy of Fighting Fraud Locally was circulated prior to the Board meeting.

Councillor Ruth Cadbury introduced a report which updated the Board on Fighting Fraud Locally, to seek approval for joint badging and for lead members to agree the final version of the report.

Councillor Cadbury was supported by Martin Smith, Chief Executive of the LB of Ealing. Martin Smith referred to what the Government will be doing to help councils tackle fraud: creating the right incentives to reward councils that reduce fraud, removing barriers to appropriate information sharing and providing professional staff with the necessary investigative powers.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Board, congratulated members and officers for their excellent work with the NFA in developing Fighting Fraud Locally.

Board members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers. In particular it would be important, when the report is published, to place the issue of fraud against councils within the wider context of the totality of fraud against the public sector.

### Decisions

#### *The Board agreed*

- *to joint badging of Fighting Fraud Locally together with the National Fraud Authority and other organisations;*
- *that the Improvement Programme Board Chairman provide the foreword to Fighting Fraud Locally;*
- *that Improvement Programme Board lead members sign-off the final version of Fighting Fraud Locally on behalf of the Board;*
- *the LGA should seek greater involvement in overseeing the delivery of Fighting Fraud Locally;*
- *to receive periodic progress reports from the Oversight Board on the delivery plan;*
- *that the LGA promote and encourage the best practice, data sharing and collaborative working highlighted in Fighting Fraud Locally, including the launch of Fighting Fraud Locally on 1 December 2011.*

### Action

Officers to take forward in accordance with the Board's discussion and decisions.

**Andrew Hughes**

#### **4. Innovation Discussion Paper**

Cllr Peter Fleming, introduced a report which asked the Board to discuss what role the LGA, under the remit of the Improvement Programme Board, should have on innovation.

Board members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers, including:

- the key was to provide support and “protection” for councils exploring initiatives for the first time so that they had a “safe place” in which it would be possible to risk failure – and then to find effective ways to share the learning with the wider sector;
- It was also important to build an approach to innovation on existing best practice – and to avoid the danger of continuing to create new and separate initiatives eg. a number of authorities have developed mortgage support schemes for first time buyers ;
- the use of the LGA Knowledge Hub which offers the opportunity to share and discuss ideas, discover more efficiency working practices and develop new and innovative ways of working;
- the need to be more proactive in going beyond solid facilitation of council’s innovation knowledge and experiences;
- agreed the core challenges under Workforce, Leadership, Improvement and Collaboration, set out on page 44 of the report.

### Decision

#### *The Board*

- ***noted*** the report;
- ***agreed*** that the Board should take the lead in promoting and facilitating council innovation;
- ***asked*** that their comments be taken into account in the development of this work.

### Action

Offices to take forward in accordance with the Board’s decisions.

**Mike Short/  
Teresa Payne**

## **5 (a) Project & Programme Management Business Case**

Dennis Skinner, Head of Leadership and Productivity, introduced a report which asked the Improvement Programme Board to make a decision on a request for funding from the LGA towards the establishment of a National Improvement

Programme (NIP) to assist the sector in programme management.

Tim Ellis, Head of Programme Management, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, put forward the business case for a NIP, seeking funding from the LGA totalling £165k in 2011-2012. Tim Ellis was supported by Graeme McDonald from SOLACE.

### Decision

#### *The Programme Board*

- **agreed** that the LGA was unable to provide funding towards the establishment of a NIP, as neither the LGA's business plan for 2011-2012, nor the RSG topslice bid, which were both produced following significant consultation with the sector, identified support for project and programme management as a priority;
- **agreed** to support the PPN Steering Group in finding alternative sources of funding.

### Action

Officers to support PPM in finding alternative sources of funding.

**Mike Short**

## **5(b) Taking the Lead Evaluation**

Juliet Whitworth, Research and Information Manager, introduced a report which asked the Board to consider and approve the proposed approach to the evaluation of *Taking the Lead* and the LGA's offer of support to the sector. Members congratulated Juliet Whitworth on a very useful report.

Cllr Ruth Cadbury drew attention to the proposal to commission opinion polling of the public in order to establish whether public trust in local government had been maintained or improved. It was explained that this would be in the context of the regular polling undertaken as part of our Reputation work.

### Decision

*The Board **agreed** that the proposed approach to evaluation was on the right lines.*

## Action

Officers to progress the approach in the light of members' discussion.

**Juliet  
Whitworth.**

### **6. Transparency and the Emerging Data Policy Issues for Local Government**

Juliet Whitworth, introduced a report which outlined the key developments in data transparency which had implications for local government. Members were asked to give a political steer on the extent to which the LGA should engage and allocate resources to this work.

Members congratulated Juliet Whitworth and Gesche Schmidt on a very useful report.

Members made a number of specific points:

- the LGA should continue to lobby for a reduction in the burden of data reporting to Government;
- Central Government should be subject to the same transparency requirements as local government;
- Complying with the transparency agenda is resource intensive and councils should have the flexibility to recoup costs through charging;
- Rather than a blanket approach to data sharing it was more effective to focus information around the needs of particular communities.

## Decision

### *The Board*

- ***noted the report;***
- ***asked that their comments be taken into account in the development of this work;***
- ***agreed that the Research and Information Team should work with Cllr Tim Cheetham, the new lead member for transparency to engage with the sector and come back with some recommendations to the Board.***



## Action

Officers/Cllr Cheetham to take forward in line with the Board's discussion and decisions.

**Cllr Tim  
Cheetham/Juliet  
Whitworth**

## **7. Notes of the last meeting**

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

### **Other Business**

The Chairman informed members that Ofsted had that day reported the outcomes of the 2011 annual children's services assessments for local authorities across England. The report showed that the majority of authorities are providing good or better children's services, with 28 authorities providing excellent services for children in their area.

Dennis Skinner advised members that the LGA was working closely with all councils who receive poor ratings.

Dennis Skinner also updated members on the current work of the Children's Improvement Board. Members suggested that the Improvement Board could provide "external challenge" to the work of the CIB.

At the close of the meeting, the Chairman informed members that this meeting would be the last Improvement Board that Jo Miller, Deputy Chief Executive, would attend as Jo was leaving the LGA on 28 November to take up her new post as Chief Executive of Doncaster MBC. The Chairman thanked Jo Miller on behalf of the Board for her contribution to its work over the past 2 years.

**Date of next meeting: 11.00am Tuesday, 17 January 2012**