

# Improvement Board

Agenda

Tuesday 15 May 2012  
11.00am

Smith Square, Rooms 3 & 4  
Local Government House  
Smith Square  
LONDON  
SW1P 3HZ

**To:** Members of the Improvement Board  
**cc:** Named officers for briefing purposes

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

## **Guidance notes for visitors**

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## **Improvement Board**

15 May 2012

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The **Improvement Board** meeting will be held on **Tuesday 15 May 2012** at **11.00am**, in Smith Square Rooms 3 & 4 (Ground Floor), Local Government House, LONDON, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be provided afterwards at 1.00pm.

### **Apologies**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

**Labour:** Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: [aicha.less@local.gov.uk](mailto:aicha.less@local.gov.uk)  
**Conservative:** Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: [luke.taylor@local.gov.uk](mailto:luke.taylor@local.gov.uk)  
**Liberal Democrat:** Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: [libdem@local.gov.uk](mailto:libdem@local.gov.uk)  
**Independent:** Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: [independent.group@local.gov.uk](mailto:independent.group@local.gov.uk)

### **Attendance Sheet**

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

### **Location**

A map showing the location of the Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

### **Contact**

Frances Marshall (Tel: 020 7664 3220, email: [frances.marshall@local.gov.uk](mailto:frances.marshall@local.gov.uk))

### **Carers' Allowance**

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## Improvement Board

Date: 8.5.12

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### Improvement Board - Membership 2011/2012

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative (6)</b>	
Peter Fleming <b>[Chair]</b>	Sevenoaks DC
Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
Michael White	Havering LB
Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
William Nunn	Breckland Council
Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
<b>Substitutes:</b>	
Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire
Peter Britcliffe	Hyndburn DC
<b>Labour (5)</b>	
Ruth Cadbury <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	Hounslow LB
Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
Helen Holland	Bristol City
Judith Blake	Leeds City
<b>Substitutes:</b>	
Theo Blackwell	Camden LB
<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>	
Jill Shortland OBE <b>[Vice Chair]</b>	Somerset CC
Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
<b>Substitute:</b>	
Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
<b>Independent (1)</b>	
Jeremy Webb <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	East Lindsey DC
<b>Substitute</b>	
John Taylor	Northumberland Council

<b>Observers</b>	
Philip Selwood, Chief Executive, Energy Savings Trust	Private Sector
Professor Dominic Shellard, Vice- Chancellor and Chief Executive, De Montfort University	Academic Institutions
Richard Priestman, Managing Director, Corporate Business, Lombard	Financial/Productivity Expertise

## LGA Improvement Board Attendance 2011-2012

<b>Councillors</b>	<b>8.09.11</b>	<b>8.11.11</b>	<b>17.01.12</b>	<b>20.03.12</b>		
<b>Conservative Group</b>						
Peter Fleming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Rod Bluh	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		
Michael White	No	No	Yes	Yes		
Richard Stay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
William Nunn	No	Yes	Yes	No		
Teresa O'Neill	Yes	No	No	Yes		
<b>Labour Group</b>						
Ruth Cadbury	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Tony McDermott MBE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Tim Cheetham	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Helen Holland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Judith Blake	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
<b>Lib Dem Group</b>						
Jill Shortland OBE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		
Edward Lord OBE JP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
<b>Independent</b>						
Jeremy Webb	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		
<b>Substitutes</b>						
Tony Jackson	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Theo Blackwell	Yes					
David Williams CBE		Yes				
Peter Britcliffe		Yes		Yes		
Jonathan Owen		Yes				
Apu Bagchi		Yes				





## Agenda

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### Improvement Board

15 May 2012

11.00pm

Smith Square Rooms 3 and 4, Local Government House

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1.	<b>Improvement</b>  Peer Challenge: Feedback and Evaluation  Councillor Sean Brennan from Sutton London Borough Council will be in attendance to speak about the Council's Peer Challenge experience.	3
2.	<b>Transparency</b>  Impact Assessment of INSPIRE  Councillor David Parsons, Chairman of the Environment and Housing Board will be in attendance to take part in the discussion.	17
3.	<b>Productivity</b>  Productivity Programme Update  Nalin Seneviratne, Director of Property Services from Sheffield City Council will be in attendance to talk about the Council's experience of being part of the Capital Assets Programme.	23
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5.	<b>Innovation</b>  Creative Councils Update	41
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7.	<b>Date of next meeting</b> – Tuesday 17 July 2012 at 11.00am	



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## **Peer Challenge: Feedback and Evaluation**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

The report invites the Improvement Board to consider and comment on the evaluation of the first phase of the peer challenge programme in the light of feedback received from participating authorities and more broadly with the sector, together with the emerging findings of the evaluation being carried out by Cardiff Business School.

In addition, Councillor Sean Brennan, the leader of the London Borough of Sutton at the time of their peer challenge in February, has been invited to the meeting to share his experience of the peer challenge and reflect on issues discussed at the recent leaders' sounding board meeting.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to comment on the feedback and evaluation and approve the proposed actions to further strengthen and improve peer challenge.

### **Action**

To pursue next steps in the light of members' discussion.

**Contact officer:** Andy Bates  
**Position:** Principal Adviser, Peer Support  
**Phone no:** 07919 562849  
**E-mail:** [Andy.bates@local.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.bates@local.gov.uk)



## **Peer Challenge – Feedback and Evaluation**

### **Background**

1. Peer challenge is a key element of the LGA’s “Taking the Lead” offer.
2. 20 councils have so far had one of the new corporate peer challenges, with a further 60 booked/ in discussion.
3. At its previous meeting the Improvement Board received a brief update on the programme and was promised a detailed report on the outcome of the review and evaluation of the peer challenge programme at its meeting on 15 May.
4. Peer challenge is sector-led, and one of the key principles we have followed throughout the development, initial piloting and current roll-out of the programme, has been to ensure on-going dialogue with the sector to ensure we learn from and adapt the programme to meet the sector’s requirements.
5. Feedback takes a number of forms, and this paper draws on learning from the following:
  - 5.1 telephone interviews with each chief executive after a peer challenge;
  - 5.2 sounding board meetings in February with leaders of councils that have had a peer challenge, and leading members on peer teams;
  - 5.3 sounding board meetings, held in January and March, with chief executives who have led or received peer challenges;
  - 5.4 the Advisory Board on sector self-regulation and improvement in March who heard from the leader of Swale and chief executive of Sutton; and
  - 5.5 a survey of the views of county councils involving the Association of County Chief Executives (ACCE) completed in April.
6. In addition, as part of the wider evaluation of “Taking the Lead”, approved by the Improvement Board, we have commissioned Cardiff Business School to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the LGA’s peer challenge programme. This is being undertaken in two parts: a process review, which has been completed and is due to be reported in June, with a longer-term impact assessment due by spring 2013. The emerging findings from the first phase are outlined in this paper.

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7. Councillor Sean Brennan will offer his personal reflections on the process as experienced by London Borough of Sutton.

**Feedback from the sector**

8. Overall the feedback from the sector generally, and in particular among those authorities that have participated in the programme, has been very positive. A number of themes have emerged:
  - 8.1 The voluntary and flexible nature of the peer challenge offer is strongly supported. The ability of councils to choose the timing, reflecting their own planning and improvement cycles and to take account of elections and changes in political and managerial leaders, as well as to choose the areas of focus has been universally welcomed.
  - 8.2 The forward focus, looking at the present and how to inform the next steps on a council's improvement journey (rather than backward looking review, based on a one-size fits all benchmark or KLOE) is seen as positive. This has helped councils gain expert insights from others in the local government sector to help them with their own issues and agenda.
  - 8.3 The quality of the process and in particular of the peer teams has been high. It is recognised that the value of the process rests very heavily on the quality of the peers and this is seen as one of the potential on-going challenges to the long term success of the peer challenge programme.
  - 8.4 Peer teams have provided constructive challenge (described by one council leader as "having raised good questions for us to consider, rather than dictating solutions") but have also delivered tough messages, on the effectiveness of the political or managerial leadership, the need to strengthen corporate capacity and focus on key priorities, or to put in place robust plans for transition and to achieve budget reductions.
  - 8.5 Retaining a small core focus on corporate issues is seen as important and there is support for strengthening our focus on financial planning and viability, given the potential risk this poses to councils in the medium-term.
9. Leaders and chief executives also put forward a number of helpful suggestions for how the LGA could strengthen the offer, summarised below. An extract from the meetings with leaders and leading members is attached at **Appendix 1**.
  - 9.1 Strengthen pre and post engagement of the peer team with the council.

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- 9.2 Maintain and improve the quality/availability of local government peers.
  - 9.3 Expand the peer pool to include others from outside the sector.
  - 9.4 Look at ways to survey external partners and community organisations
  - 9.5 Organise an event with the trade press to promote understanding of the new approach and its value to the sector.
  - 9.6 Ask leaders, chief executives and county councils to encourage take-up.
  - 9.7 Ensure peer teams deliver an appropriate level of challenge.
  - 9.8 Encourage councils to publish the findings of their peer challenge.
  - 9.9 Publicise those councils that have a peer challenge to encourage others.
10. The independent Advisory Board on sector led improvement specifically asked that LGA give further consideration to the issue of publication and whether there should be a stronger expectation that the peer challenge reports were in the public domain.

**Emerging findings from the external evaluation**

11. Cardiff Business School have conducted structured interviews with 12 of the councils which have had a peer challenge. In 5 authorities, interviews were conducted in person with the leader, chief executive and head of performance, plus two of three other senior officers involved in the peer challenge. Interviews in the other seven authorities were conducted by phone with the leader, chief executive and head of performance.
12. The final report on this first phase of the evaluation will be available in June 2012, but the emerging findings include the following observations:
- 12.1 The reasons for requesting corporate peer challenges are many and varied and the timing was often crucial to feed into the council's own planning horizon.
  - 12.2 The set up meeting was often seen as absolutely crucial in determining the success of the challenge. Most councils were very happy with how the process had been handled, but there would be value in formalising and standardising it. There is value in contact between the team and

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authority in advance. All recognised the process was less onerous than preparation for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

- 12.3 There was widespread praise for the way in which the peer challenge process was conducted. Interviewees were impressed by how well prepared teams seemed to be, how quickly they got to grips with the local context and particular issues, and the insights they provided in their feedback.
- 12.4 There was near unanimous support for the inclusion of the core components, but views varied about whether this part of the process was sufficiently rigorous, including the need for more in-depth and expert examination of use of resources. The quality of the examination of the specific issues which authorities asked challenges to focus on depended on the expertise of the team. Most councils felt that the process had been proportionate and time well spent. Several also reported on the need for a change of attitude on their part to get out of the 'old inspection mindset'.
- 12.5 Overall, councils were extremely impressed with the quality of peer challenge teams and what a good match had been achieved. Councils also wanted (and valued the LGA's ability to source via the national pool) peers from outside their region. Teams had been of the right size and had the right combination of skills and experience. There is recognition that in the absence of a standardised methodology, scoring system or KLOEs, that the quality of the peer challenge is very dependent on the experience of the peer team that undertakes it. There is concern about whether the current quality can be maintained as demand for peer challenges grows, one commented, "the LGA needs to jealously protect the quality of the peer team".
- 12.6 Feedback given at the end of the visit was seen as fair and balanced. Authorities valued an external perspective, the reassurance it gave to some that they are on the right track, the confidence it gave politicians to tackle issues or press ahead with changes; or in other cases that it raised issues that the council had been not particularly aware or had not prioritised before. In these cases the feedback often gave the authority a framework for thinking about and language for talking about issues that they had not previously addressed. The importance of politicians being at this final session is something that should be stressed.
- 12.7 On the whole councils that opted for a written report were content with it. Views about whether reports should be published varied. Most saw



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transparency as important, but that forcing authorities to publish reports would detract from the process.

12.8 There is some uncertainty about the follow up process. Most councils understood that they had the option of a follow up visit, but were less clear how this could be best used and some suggested the LGA provide a clearer menu of options. What is clear is that councils value the opportunity for on-going dialogue and engagement of the peer team. Some praised the follow up work by the LGA in providing examples of good practice in areas that the peer challenge process had identified as priorities, but there is room for doing much more of this. There was also a fairly widespread feeling that there was an opportunity for the LGA to use the challenge process as a springboard for taking a more comprehensive look at the kinds of support that each authority would benefit from and helping to broker this with other councils.

12.9 Work on assessing impacts is still at a very early stage and will continue. In some cases interviewees were able to point to tangible and they believed significant benefits from the process. It was not seen simply as 'holding up a mirror', but had helped inform authorities' views of their own performance and fitness for purpose with expert advice also provided to assist improvement. In one case a review team encouraged cabinet members in a district council to take a much more pro-active approach to economic development, which has led to a major change of direction for the administration. In other cases teams challenged authorities to be clearer about their strategic priorities. In all of these cases, authorities had responded by redefining strategies and in some cases adjusting budgets. Teams also provided challenge over the need for clear business cases for sharing management teams, or indeed of the need for more rather than less senior management capacity to see through its transformation programme. In another case the challenge advised of the need to change the culture of the organisation in order to make the management team more diverse and to provide more senior officer support to cabinet members – leading to change.

13. The paper also puts forward:

13.1 a number of suggestions for refining and improving the process;

13.2 a challenge, as the programme builds, around the importance of maintaining a supply of high-quality peers with the right technical expertise and also the interpersonal skills;

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- 13.3 questions around how to ensure the maximum added value from the process, whether there should be more targeting of resources and more intensive support on those councils most in need of assistance, the perceived need in some cases for more robust challenge from peers, the importance of timing and that it would be wrong to rush all authorities through a challenge in the next two years.

**Feedback from London Borough of Sutton**

- 14. The peer challenge in Liberal Democrat-controlled Sutton ran for four days from 20 to 23 February inclusive. Discussions both at, and subsequent to, the initial set-up meeting with the authority established a very clear and forward-looking focus for the challenge as set out below.
  - 14.1 Looking at the changes you are seeking to implement to ensure the council is structured and positioned to meet the requirements of the future.
  - 14.2 Providing external 'critical friend' challenge and an opportunity for reflection at a key stage prior to implementation of these changes.
  - 14.3 Looking at the political priority to implement the Localism Act, make localism work and move towards community-based.
  - 14.4 Considering the implications of the above for the council in terms of service design and delivery.
  - 14.5 Assisting the council in exploring issues around the changing nature of political leadership as the council shifts its focus from one of direct provider to commissioner and in the context of re-introducing a committee system of decision-making.
  - 14.6 Through all of the above, consider the core peer challenge questions relating to priority setting, leadership and governance, organisational capacity and financial planning.
- 15. As aspects of this suggest, the ability of the council to determine the timing of the challenge was of significant value to them.
- 16. The peer team was agreed as follows:
  - 16.1 David Hill, Chief Executive, Milton Keynes Council.
  - 16.2 Councillor Keith House, Liberal Democrat Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council and member of Hampshire County Council.
  - 16.3 Liz Jones, Deputy Chief Executive, North East Lincolnshire Council.

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- 16.4 Peer challenge manager, Local Government Association.
17. The constructive and positive mindset of the authority towards the process helped it run very smoothly indeed and maximised the benefits gained from it. They clearly understood the distinction between peer challenge and inspection and geared themselves accordingly.
18. 'The feedback at the end of the process was delivered to an audience comprising the Cabinet and senior officers and comprised a PowerPoint presentation. The final report relating to the challenge was agreed in mid-April 2012 with only minor revisions to the initial draft being requested by the council. The report was made publicly available by incorporating it into a committee report that went to the Executive on 8 May 2012 about the future direction of the council. The council is currently reflecting on the offer of follow-up activity in order to determine what form this would best take. The dialogue between the council and the LGA on this will continue.
19. The council has been approached by a number of other authorities, particularly from within London, regarding their experiences of peer challenge and have demonstrated a willingness to promote it. They have also expressed interest in providing peers for challenges in other authorities.

**Conclusion and next steps**

20. Feedback from the sector and emerging findings from the evaluation provide positive endorsement of the work LGA has led to develop and roll out peer challenge for local government. We are committed to an on-going dialogue with individual councils and other stakeholders to learn from this and to refine the offer to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the sector. In the short-term, and subject to members' discussion at the meeting, we plan to:
- 20.1 incorporate the measures identified in feedback from the sector summarised in section 9, together with proposed actions to add value and strengthen and promote the programme identified at the leaders' sounding board (**Appendix 1**) into our methodology and overall approach;
- 20.2 take on board the findings of the ACCE survey and feedback from the Advisory Board;
- 20.3 continue the work with Cardiff Business School to understand and respond to the findings of the external evaluation and publish a summary of these; and

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- 20.4 publish the learning from the first phase of corporate peer challenges and promote this via a series of events in different parts of the country involving councils that have participated in the programme.

**Financial Implications**

21. There are no additional financial implications arising as a result of this report.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Peer Challenge: Feedback and Evaluation**

#### **1. Leaders' and leading members' sounding board**

Set out below is an extract from the notes of the meetings on 17 and 29 February, chaired by Councillor Peter Fleming detailing the suggestions put forward for developing the approach to peer challenge

##### **a) Adding extra value to the receiving authority**

In terms of adding extra value to the peer challenge model from the receiving authority's perspective it was proposed:

17 February meeting:

- ensure that there is always an opportunity for a discussion between the council leader and member peer during the preparation stage;
- get the message over the new tailored and forward-looking approach is not a rehash of CPA and that the burden on participating councils is small for the added value offered;
- timetable 1-2-1 sessions for the leader and member peer to provide for an on-going dialogue throughout and the opportunity for candid advice;
- capture good practice from all councils participating in peer challenges;
- ensure that follow-up activity e.g. peer team to assist with action planning and in a follow-up review is offered in all cases; and
- encourage councils to share their reports internally e.g. via scrutiny to encourage council-wide and cross-party engagement and (at the appropriate time) publicise the outcome to local people alongside the council's action/ improvement plan.

29 February meeting:

- look at the possibility of using questionnaires to survey staff views and those of partners in advance to inform the scope and help to frame the peer challenge;
- make sure council leaders (and where there is multi-party control) group leaders as well as chief executives are involved in agreeing the focus for the peer challenge;
- create opportunities before the peer challenge for a pre-discussion between the peer team and their counterparts in the authority, including the opportunity for the leader to speak with the member peer;

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- offer follow-up activity in all cases including support with action-planning; to cascade messages to other stakeholders; or a follow-up peer challenge day to review progress; and
- encourage councils to share their reports internally to encourage council-wide and cross-party engagement and (at the appropriate time) publish them.

**b) Strengthening and promoting the programme**

A number of other potential actions to consider to strengthen and promote the overall programme were identified, as follows:

17 February meeting:

- promote the value of peer challenge to participating councils (worth approx £10,000 to a district) and this being at no cost to the council - rather than it being 'free';
- identify some of the practical ways in which peer challenges have already helped councils to demonstrate its value to the sector as an improvement tool;
- feedback on the quality of peers who have delivered so far has been very good, which is key reputationally for LGA and sector-led approach as a whole. We therefore need to review and refresh the peer pool to maintain this standard for the future;
- use leaders to promote the value of peer challenge to other leaders in the sector e.g. via LGA Conference and county and district leaders meetings;
- draw up a longer-term strategy to engage the 'less-willing' – using leaders and member peers to promote messages to counterparts in their regions;
- use the interview with the leader to sound out what is going on with neighbouring authorities and where appropriate feed this in to the 'detect and prevent' framework; and
- arrange a press briefing with LGC and MJ to ensure they understand how the new model and how this has been positioned (not a replacement for CPA) and the positive feedback from councils that have had one.

29 February meeting:

- publicise the value of peer working, in particular being part of a peer challenge team, as a learning opportunity for peers and their own authority;
- maintain and enhance the quality of peer teams by ensuring the peer pool is actively managed and kept up to date – reflecting the changing needs of the sector;

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- emphasise the importance of the preparatory stages in agreeing the focus, securing political engagement and developing effective relationships between the council and peer team;
- promote the value of peer challenge as a future orientated tool able to provide insight, advice and supportive challenge to help councils move forward and to tackle the issues that lie ahead (not as a means of measuring past achievements); and
- encourage councils to think and plan ahead to ensure they decide when the peer challenge will have the most impact for them, and to book this now (so that they get the timing they want).





## **Impact Assessment of INSPIRE**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

1. The European INSPIRE directive regulates the access and sharing of location information to support European member states in implementing environmental policy. Information covered by INSPIRE includes transport networks, addresses, land use, environmentally protected areas, risk and management zones. The purpose of INSPIRE is to allow such data to be comparable across Europe to give decision makers reliable evidence about the environment. The regulation came into force in 2009.
2. The implementation of the INSPIRE regulation across the UK is led by the UK Location Programme within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Local Government Association is working closely with the UK Location Programme team to implement INSPIRE in local government.
3. Local authorities will benefit from being able to use such location data, mainly in planning and transport but also in other service areas. But councils are also responsible for meeting the requirements of the regulation themselves, as local authorities create location information as part of their regulatory function.
4. Publishing environmental location data in accordance with INSPIRE has costs, because it requires organisations to provide information to a high technical specification (for example, using web mapping tools to present the data). Defra commissioned the LGA to carry out an impact assessment of implementing INSPIRE in local authorities. The initial assessment estimates the costs to be up to £9 million over eight years depending on whether datasets are published nationally or locally. On the other hand, there also potential costs associated with not meeting INSPIRE requirements which are likely to be passed down to authorities.
5. This report presents the draft findings of the impact assessment and outlines the next steps in relation to INSPIRE. We welcome members' views on the plans.

**Recommendation**

The Board is asked to note the report on INSPIRE and the work that has been conducted to date, and to comment on or make recommendations about plans for its future direction.

**Action**

The Research and Information Team will continue to engage with the UK Location Programme in line with any recommendations made by the Board.

<b>Contact officers:</b>	Gesche Schmid	Juliet Whitworth
<b>Position:</b>	Programme Manager Transparency	Research and Information Manager
<b>Phone no:</b>	020 7664 3290	020 7664 3287
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:gesche.schmid@local.gov.uk">gesche.schmid@local.gov.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:juliet.whitworth@local.gov.uk">juliet.whitworth@local.gov.uk</a>

## **Impact Assessment of INSPIRE**

### **What is INSPIRE?**

1. The European INSPIRE directive regulates the access and sharing of location information to support European countries in environmental policy. Information covered by INSPIRE includes transport networks, addresses, land use, environmentally protected areas, risk and management zones. The purpose of INSPIRE is to allow such data to be comparable across Europe to give decision makers reliable evidence about the environment. The regulation came into force in 2009.
2. The implementation of the INSPIRE regulation across the UK is led by the UK Location Programme within Defra. The Local Government Association is working closely with the UK Location Programme team to implement INSPIRE in local government.
3. Local authorities will benefit from being able to use such location data, mainly in planning and transport but also in other service areas. But councils are also responsible for meeting the requirements of the INSPIRE regulation themselves, as they create location information as part of their regulatory function. In total, the LGA has identified over 40 datasets that fall under INSPIRE, including:
  - 3.1 address information as part of street naming and numbering;
  - 3.2 street data as part of their highway function, environmental protected areas;
  - 3.3 land use, regulation and area management zones to protect and regulate land use and guide development as part of the planning process; and
  - 3.4 more recently, information required through various flood regulation.
4. Publishing such environmental location data in accordance with INSPIRE has costs, because it requires organisations to provide information to a high technical specification including:
  - 4.1 the signposting of data on data.gov.uk to given metadata standards;
  - 4.2 the publishing of information through specific web services to be able to view and download the data;
  - 4.3 the availability of data according to given data standards; and
  - 4.4 the sharing of data with EU bodies.

5. Defra have commissioned the LGA to carry out an impact assessment of implementing INSPIRE in local authorities. The first assessment (Annex I) took place in 2009/10, and the next section in this report outlines the draft findings from the impact assessment of the second phase (known as Annex III). The implementation is phased over 10 years, with full completion required by 2020.

### **Implications of meeting INSPIRE obligations**

6. Local authorities will benefit from INSPIRE as it will improve data management within councils and provide easier access to more consistent information for environmental impact assessments, development control, planning, flood risk assessments and other service areas. As one officer pointed out: “INSPIRE should be seen as an opportunity (for better data management), not an EU burden.”
7. However, there is a cost of meeting the requirements as few local authorities have currently the technical capabilities to meet the INSPIRE requirements. A recent LGA survey revealed that only 3 per cent of local authorities are ready to meet the requirements. Barrow Borough Council is the only council that is fully INSPIRE compliant and links their data and services directly to data.gov.uk. Most authorities do not even meet half of the technical requirements and stated a lack of resource, understanding and senior management engagement as barriers to implementing INSPIRE. Authorities with an existing good data management will find it easier to implement INSPIRE whereas authorities that are lagging behind in modernising the way they manage their data will face a larger burden.
8. There is certainly a cost to local authorities for implementing the INSPIRE standards framework. The INSPIRE impact assessment estimated implementation costs to UK local government of around £9 million. The LGA has worked closely with Defra to find cost effective solutions to meet some of the requirements: we found national portal providers who could publish the data to the required technical standards on councils’ behalf (such as GeoPlace for addressing and streets, Natural England for local nature reserves and English Heritage for conservation areas). There was no additional cost to local authorities meeting INSPIRE compliance in this way, other than submitting the datasets to the national providers where they were collated and published.
9. Overall Defra and the UK Location Programme have been supportive of the cost burden faced by local authorities and have been working closely with the LGA to find solutions to reduce the burden.

10. The LGA is currently evaluating a range of possible options for meeting the technical requirements and the associated costs of making the remaining INSPIRE datasets compliant. The individual costs to local authorities ranging from £23,000 to £44,000. Local publishing solutions are likely to be more costly overall, as the required infrastructure investment would be multiplied 362 times (for each local authority and national parks). A national portal solution is favoured by two thirds of local authorities but would require central commissioning, coordination and ownership at national level. The costs are based on meeting full compliance at the current technical level and include external costs through commercial providers and internal staff resources in local authorities over the next eight years.

### **Next steps**

11. Defra is currently reviewing the costs estimated by the LGA. More cost effective solutions may be found by utilising newly emerging portals; and technological advances in five years time may not require expensive data conversions which make up two thirds of the above costs.

12. Under the burdens assessment, we are trying to compare costs with the potential savings from the use of the location infrastructure. Currently, benefits are difficult to quantify as the infrastructure is new and comparable usage assessments are not available. However, as the technology matures and organisations start to use the infrastructure we hope that the benefits can be better quantified. We propose to evaluate future savings from INSPIRE as part of a wider value study of the local benefits of open data.

13. We are working with UK Location Programme to:

- 13.1 review and agree the likely extent of burdens on local authorities;
- 13.2 minimise those burdens by finding the best possible solutions for implementing INSPIRE in local authorities. Options range from local publishing services, publishing through a regional/partnership, or publishing using central services. A hybrid approach between local, regional and national solutions may be the most likely option to take account of localism and local ownership; and
- 13.3 support local authorities and help them understand INSPIRE. The UK Location Programme together with the LGA will revise guidance to meet local authority needs, and run four regional workshops in spring/summer to inform about INSPIRE and take local authority views. The LGA has also established an expert group from local authorities to consult on proposals and solutions.



## **Productivity Programme Update**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

The report updates the Board on the progress being made in the Productivity Programme in the areas of procurement, common financial assessment and waste management.

The Board will also hear from Sheffield City Council about their experiences being part of the Productivity Programme's Capital Assets Programme.

### **Recommendations**

1. Note the recent publication of shared services research.
2. Note the progress made on developing a local government procurement pledge and the consultation currently underway.
3. Support the common financial assessment, currently being piloted as a way of saving councils £70 million per year and delivering up 40 per cent efficiency gains, through the ways identified in paragraph 13.
4. Note the take-up of assistance to help in bidding for the Department for Communities and Local Government's (CLG) weekly waste collection support scheme.
5. To hear from Sheffield City Council about their experiences of being involved in the Capital Asset Pathfinders programme.

### **Actions**

Officers to continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and any recommendations made.

**Contact officer:** Andrew Hughes  
**Position:** Productivity Programme  
**Phone no:** 07909 534 185 / 0207 664 3192  
**E-mail:** [andrew.hughes@local.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.hughes@local.gov.uk)





## **Productivity Programme Update**

### **Background**

1. The Board have previously approved the Productivity Programme to develop and operate a range of programmes to improve productivity and efficiency in councils. This report provides an update on selected areas of the programme. The Board is asked to note that fraud is now being taken forward by the Finance Task Group.

### **Shared Services**

2. The Productivity Team recently concluded and published *Crossing the Border: Research into shared chief executives*<sup>1</sup>. The report, published in March, analysed the ingredients for a successful shared chief executive arrangement, based on emerging experience in a number of councils around England. The report interviewed 25 council leaders and chief executives from a range of shared management initiatives and was well received in both the Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal; it provides lessons for councillors and officers interested in pursuing shared chief executive arrangements, facilitates discussion of the issues and scopes out best practice.

### **Procurement**

#### Procurement Hub Business Case

3. Members will be aware that Andrew Smith, Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council, has been working on the Board's behalf on the production of a new National Procurement Strategy. These considerations will also look at the scope for a national buying agency - often referred to as a National Procurement Hub - for goods and services, such as energy, that are produced nationally.
4. A consultancy with expertise in this area has now been commissioned to develop a business case. The LGA is providing some of the funding needed for this work with the remainder being contributed partly by Hampshire CC and partly by the consultant on a pro bono basis. The business case will include a survey of councils' attitudes to the concept of a hub, spend analysis and establish whether a case exists. The business case will be finalised by the end of July and presented to the Board at its September meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Crossing the Border: Research into shared chief executives  
[http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=c1df91b3-b60c-4f34-a3d9-00ada9fc6e91&groupId=10161](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=c1df91b3-b60c-4f34-a3d9-00ada9fc6e91&groupId=10161)

Procurement Pledge

5. Number 10 and the Cabinet Office have for some time been asking the LGA to be co-signatories to their Procurement Pledge. At its last meeting this Board took the decision not to sign the Pledge as it was more geared toward central government's spending activities, big business and did not adequately reflect local government's procurement approaches. The Board took the decision to develop a Local Government Procurement Pledge.
6. We have developed a draft Local Government Procurement Pledge (attached at **Appendix 1**) that emphasises:
  - 6.1 the importance of our £62 billion annual spend: as well as achieving Value for Money (VfM) for taxpayers and also good outcomes for our citizens and service users it also provides a significant stimulus in the local economy;
  - 6.2 the sector's commitment to supporting local economic growth, and by extension UK companies and the voluntary sector;
  - 6.3 the importance of working with all suppliers (big multinationals, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the voluntary sector) in order to reduce the bureaucracy of bidding for local government work; and
  - 6.4 our desire to work with central government to reduce the burdens that are in place around procurement, particularly from the EU.
7. Our Pledge is out to consultation until 8 June 2012. We believe this approach will complement local government's strong track record on procurement, the existing regional procurement arrangements and portals, and be more accessible to local SMEs. The final version will be reported to the July Board meeting.

**Common Financial Assessment**

8. There are currently 206 local authorities with social care responsibilities in England, Scotland and Wales which collectively undertake approximately 680,000 new assessments and one million re-assessments a year of the ability of older people to pay for care services.
9. A project is underway to improve the way these assessments are carried out. This will involve using information held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that will help reduce duplication, error and rework in councils. It is aiming to transform the way that financial assessments are performed in adult social care and will make significant savings for both councils and the DWP whilst improving the quality of service for some of the most vulnerable in society. The initiative aims to save local authorities over £70 million a year.

**Item 3**

10. The project is led by iNetwork - legacy NW RIEP group with sponsorship from several local authorities and DWP and support from the National Association of Financial Assessment Officers (NAFAO), the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS), the Institute of Revenues Ratings and Valuations (IRRV) and the Local e-Government Standards Body (LeGSB). iNetwork have invited the LGA to be involved in this work and to support initiatives.
11. The new assessments solution is being deployed at three councils<sup>2</sup> and being evaluated by a further eleven. It is providing 30-40 per cent efficiency gains compared to a paper based operational model.
12. Resolving the mechanism for actual sharing of data has been problematic. iNetwork are now working with DWP to develop a data sharing mechanism and process for national rollout as soon as possible after the data sharing clauses come into force in June 2012.
13. It is recommended that the LGA supports this initiative in the following ways:
  - 13.1 to endorse the sharing of data via secure email as interim process used by local authorities for obtaining social security data from DWP and to endorse the need to change to a more efficient data sharing solution longer term;
  - 13.2 to represent the LAs as a united group to the DWP;
  - 13.3 to approve and communicate the staged rollout process to local authorities; and
  - 13.4 to provide support via a limited number of dissemination and engagement forums for rollout.

## **Waste Management**

14. The Productivity Team has been supporting councils that are bidding for CLG's weekly [waste] collection support scheme, through which £250 million new money is being made available to councils. In addition to coordinating a guidance document highlighting the resources councils could draw on to develop their bids, the Team arranged five workshops throughout the country to provide further information and guidance from CLG, Local Partnerships and a number of waste experts. Over 120 councils attended the workshops.
15. Separately, we now have confirmation from Severn Trent Water that they are willing to a pilot enabling households to dispose of food waste using macerators

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<sup>2</sup> Sefton Council, Tameside Council and Lancashire County Council

fitted into kitchen sinks. We are progressing plans for the pilot with the intention of starting this later in 2012.

### **Council Experience of the Productivity Programme**

16. The Improvement Board will hear from Nalin Seneviratne, Director of Property Services at Sheffield City Council. Sheffield City Council took part in the Capital Asset Programme Wave 2 and he will provide feedback to the Board on Sheffield's Experiences.
17. The Local Government Association has now worked with 26 councils to develop best practice in the management of capital assets. Our work has shown that by adopting a strategic pan-public sector approach to customer demand, assets, and capital management at the local level, money can be saved and services improved. Close collaboration at the local level can deliver better services outcomes and reduce the cost of delivery. Pathfinders have identified significant reductions in both operating space and running costs; **Appendix 2** shows the latest interim results from some of the Wave 2 pathfinders.

### **Financial Implications**

18. The business plans for 2012/13 includes resources to develop the productivity programme to support councils improve productivity. Capacity to support the programme has also been built into the LGA budgets and business plan.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Draft Procurement Pledge for Local Authorities**

#### **Background:**

Council spend in the private sector is worth over £62bn each year – councils recognise the need to maximise the opportunities that procurement provides in ensuring value for money, and in helping support their local economy. This is particularly so as councils wrestle with an average 28% reduction in their funding during the current Spending Review period, as well as the wider economic downturn.

The changing landscape of council contracting arrangements includes increasing numbers of shared service arrangements and pooling of resources. Reductions in funding mean that councils are seeking better value for the tax payer as services are reconfigured, and there is more co-production with citizens and the voluntary sector.

Any initiative that helps procurement to drive efficiency savings, achieves better outcomes, and makes it easier for councils and local providers to do business by reducing bureaucracy and simplifying processes has the support of the sector.

#### **Local Government Procurement Pledge:**

Local government will use all efforts to use procurement to help:

- Deliver value for public money
- Drive local economic growth and regeneration
- Provide inclusive services through a diverse supplier base.

To this end we pledge to increase our efforts:

- to promote and implement procurement processes that are less bureaucratic and burdensome,
- to build our skills, capacity and expertise in procurement
- to engage effectively with users, citizens and partners to ensure that the goods and or services being procured meet their needs and where appropriate involve them in the procurement process
- to engage effectively with suppliers through market days, pre-procurement dialogue, and provide transparent feedback, making them aware of trading opportunities and securing their input and expertise
- to engage with the Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Federation, voluntary sector representatives, and other representative trade & industry bodies
- to seek feedback from suppliers and use this learning to further improve procurement processes.

### **Procurement support from the LGA:**

As part of our wider work we will support councils to use procurement more effectively in a number of practical ways, including:

- Identifying and promoting current good practice – building on the work done through the Quick Wins and Big Wins strategies; encouraging councils to drop Pre Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ's) for contracts under £100k; and encouraging councils to advertise their contract opportunities on Contracts Finder and regional portals.
- Co-ordinating and facilitating a 'voice' for the sector through the National Advisory Group for Local Government Procurement
- Encouraging greater collaboration and joint procurement by local authorities – including providing support to 8 category management projects involving 70 local authorities
- Help in navigating EU procurement legislation and regulation through publications such as 'Buying into Communities'

### **Support from Government**

On behalf of the sector the LGA would like to work with the Cabinet Office and central government to help improve all public procurement.

Public procurement is highly regulated particularly by the European Union and over the years the European procurement rules have become more and more complicated. We need help from government to put the power of procurement back into the hands of local government.

There are many aspects of the current procurement "culture" that we think can only be challenged and changed collectively by us, including reducing the risk averse approach to public sector procurement.

**Local Government Association**  
**April 2012**

**Appendix 2**

**Summary of Expected Savings for Selected Capital Asset Wave 2 Pathfinders**

<b>Figures provided, over 10 years, by...</b>	<b>% reduction in footprint</b>	<b>% reduction in carbon</b>	<b>£ capital receipts</b>	<b>£ reduction in running costs</b>	<b>Growth</b>
Devon	79%	1% (non schools)	£1.2m	£12.5m	Capital receipts used to fund capital programme
East Sussex	20%	20%	£30m	£100m	To be developed as part of the next stage
Newcastle	30%	Not known	£6.45m	27%	All surplus buildings subject to an appraisal to meet council and partners' priorities
Northumberland	20%	50%	£13.2	£70m	Sites will be used to deliver affordable homes & sites for employment
Sheffield	18% LA 6% wider public sector	63,000tonnes	£80m LA only (after reinvestment)	£90m	
Shropshire	35%	25%	£75m	£7.5m	25% increase in housing, 50% increase in Community use





**Item 4**

## **Leadership and Localism Progress Report: May 2012**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to update the Improvement Board on the 2012/13 Leadership work programme and new 'offer to councils'.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to note the Leadership and Localism team's programme of work, and to make recommendations regarding its future direction.

### **Action**

The Leadership and Localism team will continue to develop and deliver the programmes in line with this report and any recommendations made.

**Contact officer:** Pascoe Sawyers  
**Position:** Principal Adviser, Leadership & Localism  
**Phone no:** 0207 664 3053  
**E-mail:** [pascoe.sawyers@local.gov.uk](mailto:pascoe.sawyers@local.gov.uk)



## **Leadership and Localism Progress Report: May 2012**

### **Background**

1. Throughout 2011/12 the Leadership & Localism team worked to bring together key offers from the various central bodies integrated in the restructuring as well as new offers reflecting the LGA's priorities around leadership development. The aim has been to create a coherent offer to support and develop both the political and managerial leadership capacity of local authorities and of local government as a sector in order to facilitate sector-led improvement.
2. This work has been supported and guided by a Leadership Panel, a sub-group of the Improvement Board which has provided a forum for a more detailed discussion about the offer. The Panel consists of Cllrs Richard Stay (Chair), Roderick Bluh, Ruth Cadbury, Edward Lord, Helen Holland and William Nunn.

### **2012/13 Programme**

3. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the 2012/13 programme of work and to provide an overview of the offer as a whole as we plan to promote it to councils.
4. The offer consists of two "development ladders", one for political leadership development and one for managerial leadership development, which come together at the top to form a pyramid (see **Appendix 1**) with appropriate programmes at different levels to support leadership development from new entrants to senior strategic leaders.

### **Managerial leadership**

5. Entry level development is provided through the **National Graduate Development Programme**. This programme aims to recruit and develop high quality graduates to provide a pool of future senior managers for the sector as a whole. In response to feedback from councils, the selection process has been redesigned to focus on attitudes and attributes (e.g. commitment to local government) rather than on skills which can be developed on the programme. Similarly the development programme itself has been restructured to cover practical skills and understanding of issues rather than academic knowledge.
6. **PLANNED ACTION:** As well as continuing the development of the programme to make it more practically based and focused on the future leadership needs of local government we will be doing more to promote the scheme to councils and particularly to increase the involvement of councils outside London.

**Item 4**

7. The offer to existing managers consists of a series of external development programmes which have been inherited from the previous central bodies. The general arrangement is that the LGA jointly badges and promotes the programme with the financial risk being borne by the provider. The offer currently consists of three programmes:
  - 7.1 *Strategic leadership in modern local government* (with KBA Solutions) aimed at managers looking to develop into strategic leaders.
  - 7.2 *Academy for Executive Leadership* (with Ashridge Business School) aimed at developing those already in strategic leadership positions.
  - 7.3 To supplement these we also promote the SOLACE *Aspiring future public sector leaders* programme.
8. The rationale for this approach is that there is an existing pool of commercially available programmes aimed at and suitable for public sector managers so that we do not need to involve ourselves in direct provision.
9. **PLANNED ACTION:** We do need to review this provision in 2012/13 to ensure that the programmes are:
  - 9.1 relevant to the existing and future leadership needs of local government;
  - 9.2 sufficiently differentiated in terms of target audience; and
  - 9.3 delivering the best available deal to the LGA in return for its association with the programme.

**Political Leadership**

10. The offer around political leadership development starts with the **Be a Councillor** campaign which aims at encouraging a wider range of people to engage with the process so that the profile of councillors better reflects the communities they represent. Working closely with the LGA Group offices the main focus is on developing and supporting existing councillors as “talent scouts”. The materials to support the programme have just been refreshed.
11. **PLANNED ACTION:** During 2012/13 it is planned to subject the delivery of this programme to tender with the new providers commencing work in April 2013.
12. The offer for **New Councillor Induction** consists of the Councillor’s Guide, a folder provided free to all new councillors that gives an overview of local government, the role of the councillor, key issues and the work of the LGA. A new development in 2011/12 was the provision of a series of “road show” events for new councillors.

**Item 4**

13. **PLANNED ACTION:** Given there are fewer elections in 2012, five are planned for 2012. We are discussing the programmes for the events with the regional LGA bodies to ensure there is no duplication with regional induction activities, the content will be a mix of skills development and issue briefings but the key objective is to explain and promote the role of the LGA in supporting them as councillors.
14. The **21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor / Community Leadership** offer provides a range of materials and approaches to support local and regional councillor development initiatives to develop councillors to lead their local communities. This includes:
- 14.1 the Member Development Charter;
  - 14.2 the Political Skills Framework; and
  - 14.3 a range of workbooks, podcasts and other materials.
15. **PLANNED ACTION:** During 2012/13 we will be developing a series of skills training packages that councils can use to run their own internal development programmes.
16. **Leadership Academy** is one of the LGA's flagship offers. Delivered on a cross-party basis it focuses on developing the personal leadership capacity of senior councillors (e.g. leaders and deputy leaders, group leaders, cabinet members and portfolio holders, group spokespersons, committee chairs) and those with the real potential to develop and move into such positions. As well as the main programme there are events aimed at specific groups such as young councillors and BAME councillors and a series of focused programmes on specific policy/service areas which are sponsored by the appropriate LGA programme teams.
17. **PLANNED ACTION:** Over 2012/13 we plan to offer up to 9 main programmes and 12 focused programmes. Towards the end of the year we are also due to commence the tendering process for the delivery of the main programme from 2013 onwards.
18. The **Next Generation Programme** is a "fast track" programme aimed at developing young and promising councillors to become the future leaders, not just of their councils and communities but also at a regional and national level. It focuses more on political policy leadership issues and so is delivered on a party group basis with one cohort per year for each group. Although aimed at all such councillors it has been seen as a programme for young councillors. In 2011/12 we commenced a tendering process, in consultation with the relevant LGA group offices for the delivery of this programme and this process will be completed in 2012/13.

**Item 4**

19. **PLANNED ACTION:** It is proposed to market the programme more explicitly at all councillors with the real potential to take on a wider leadership role rather than just at young councillors.

**Joint Leadership Development**

20. The **Leeds Castle** programme is at the apex of the pyramid and provides an opportunity for senior council leaders and chief executives to develop jointly as the strategic leaders of the local government sector at a national level. Participation is by invitation based on recommendations from a range of stakeholders including the LGA group offices.

21. **PLANNED ACTION:** In 2011/12 we commenced a tendering process for the delivery of this programme and this process will be completed in 2012/13.

22. During the course of the year we also offer some events bringing together **NGDP** trainees with participants on the **Next Generation** programme. This is partly to give each more exposure to councillors and officers respectively so that they can explore their respective views on key issues but also to develop their shared experience and understanding as the future strategic leaders of the local government sector.

23. **PLANNED ACTION:** It is proposed to explore how such opportunities can be extended to the alumni of the two programmes as well as the existing participants.

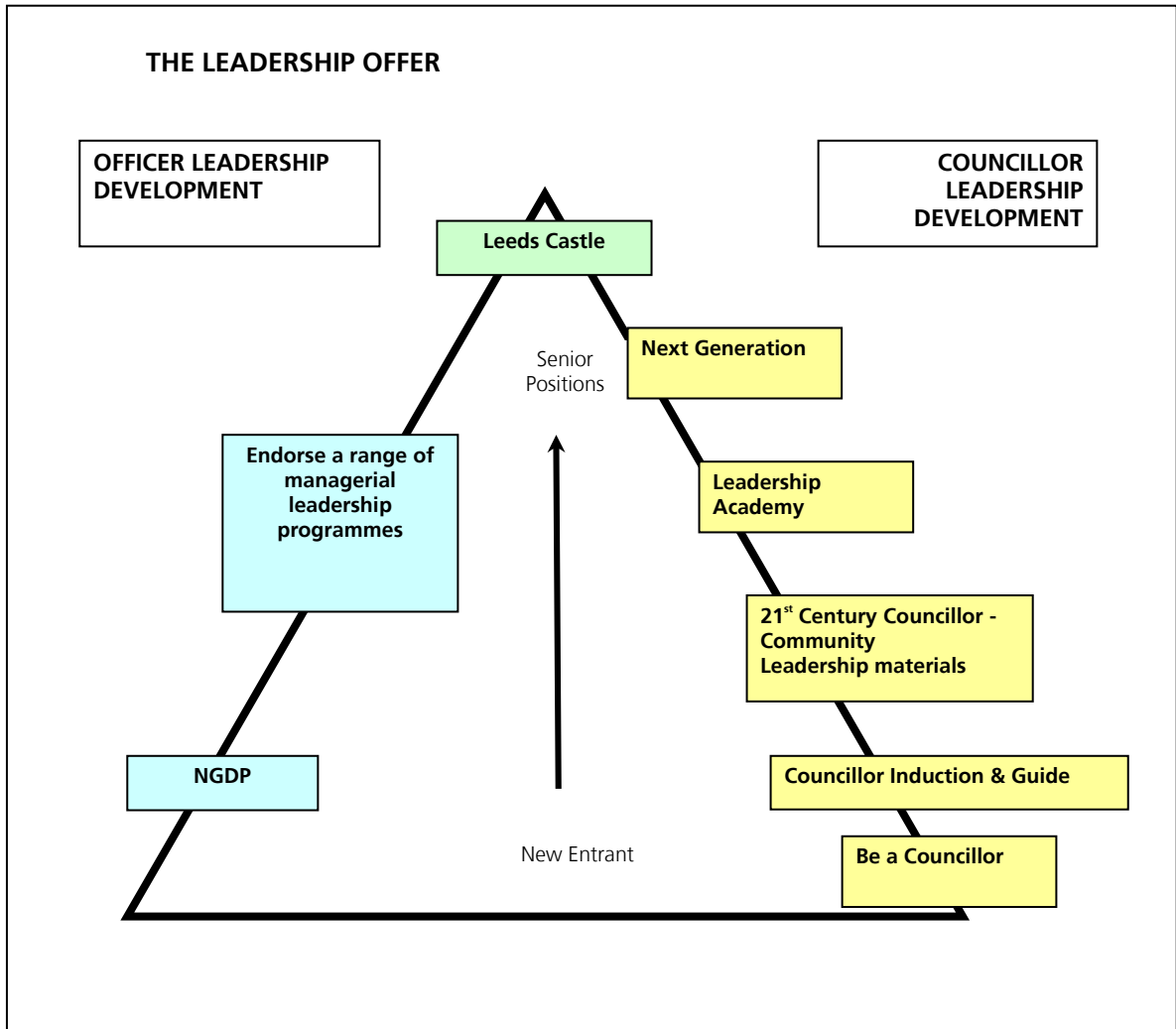
**Financial implications**

24. There are no financial implications beyond those already set out in the work planning and budget-setting process. In delivering the programme the Leadership and Localism team will continue to seek to make savings where possible and to maximise the value of the available budget.

**Item 4: Appendix 1**

**Appendix 1**

**The Leadership Offer:**







## **Creative Councils Update**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

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

The Creative Councils Selection Panel will meet on 16 May 2012 to select the proposals which will then receive further support from the programme.

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to comment on the update and the forward work programme of the Creative Councils initiative.

### **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:**

Mike Short

Teresa Payne

### **Position:**

Senior Adviser

Senior Adviser

### **Phone no:**

07799 038432

07879 640823

### **E-mail:**

[mike.short@local.gov.uk](mailto:mike.short@local.gov.uk)

[teresa.payne@local.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.payne@local.gov.uk)



## **Creative Councils Update**

### **Background**

1. The Creative Councils programme is a joint programme between the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) and the LGA. As reported at previous meetings of the Improvement Board, the ambition is to work with a small group of creative, pioneering councils and their partners throughout England and Wales in developing, implementing and spreading transformational new approaches to meeting some of the biggest medium and long-term challenges facing communities and local services.
2. The 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.

### **Programme Progress to date**

3. Phase 1 of the programme, launched in April 2011, called for councils to submit ideas for addressing some of the biggest medium and long-term challenges facing communities and local services. 137 councils offered up innovative ideas which were robustly assessed by a NESTA-LGA project team and a Creative Councils Selection Panel. They selected 17 of the most promising ideas with most transformative potential to receive financial and non-financial support to develop their thinking and establish the potential to spread innovation to other areas.
4. Phase 2 provided a support package to the 17 that included a programme of events, workshops and assistance via 'point people' (appointed from the Innovation Unit) to help the councils develop their vision. The first event, a Creative Councils Camp in Birmingham held in September 2011, provided the opportunity for Leaders and Chief Executives of the 17 selected councils and their "ideas leads" to learn about the support on offer to them and the potential to create and work in clusters of councils.
5. The event was also an opportunity to gain further intelligence on the ideas and the extent to which councils through to this round appeared to have the necessary conditions in place to be successful at innovation. A Creative Councils group has been formed on the Knowledge hub to facilitate the progress of clustering, capturing of information, enhancing the involvement of the local government sector and disseminating information to a wider audience.
6. The Selection Panel in November, having received more details of the 17 Creative Councils Action Plans developed with their appointed "point person",

agreed that all 17 would receive financial and non-financial support up until the end of March 2012. Using these resources, the councils would need to be able to produce/demonstrate six things:

- 6.1 A clear description of the medium-long term challenge ('the problem').
  - 6.2 A clear description of the solution.
  - 6.3 The evidence base.
  - 6.4 A clear and convincing description of the relationship between the above.
  - 6.5 A description of the team and stakeholder relationships that need to be in place to be able to implement the solution, including a clear commitment to support implementation from the Chief Executive and Leader.
  - 6.6 The business case.
7. On 22/23 February 2012 the second 'Creative Camp' for all 17 Creative Councils was an opportunity for councils to share experiences on their respective progress and any shared learning. The main feature was for each of the 17 Creative Councils to 'pitch' their ideas and progress to a panel of peer representatives from fellow Creative Councils, NESTA and LGA. All of them found this to be an invaluable exercise in preparing for wider dissemination to the sector and many are incorporating the panel's feedback and suggestions in their proposals and methods of presentation.

### **Planned activities**

8. In Phase 3 of the programme the intention is to provide more significant support for the 5 or so best ideas. 15 Creative Councils submitted their final action plan on 26th April; Brighton, Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Essex, Havering, Islington, Monmouthshire, Reading, Rotherham, Stoke, Wigan, Westminster and York. Both Leicester and Rossendale have withdrawn from the programme at this stage and have not submitted an action plan. **Appendix 1**, which will provide a summary of these 15 action plans, will be tabled at the meeting.
9. The Selection Panel meets on 16 May to make its decision about which of the best ideas will receive further support and a public announcement will be made on 31 May.
10. There will also be a workshop at the LGA Annual Conference on 26 June – Creative Councils: The Discipline of Innovation. This workshop will debate how disciplined local government is at innovating. Geoff Mulgan, NESTA, Leaders of Finalists in Creative Councils, Innovation Unit and Cllr Fleming, Chairman of Improvement Board will be invited to contribute.

**Conclusion**

11. This is an exciting and interesting programme that offers many lessons for the local government sector in how best to innovate in meeting the requirements of Public Services Reform agenda.

**Financial Implications**

12. NESTA is providing £2 million and LGA £1 million as their respective contributions to the Creative Councils programme.



## **Note of decisions taken and actions required**

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<b>Title:</b>	Improvement Board
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, 20 March 2012
<b>Time:</b>	11.00 am – 1.10 pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Local Government House

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### **Attendance**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Council</b>
Chairman	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Vice Chairman	Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
Deputy-Chairman	Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LB
Deputy-Chairman	Jeremy Webb	East Lindsey DC
Members	Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
	Michael White	Havering LB
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
	Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
	Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Judith Blake	Leeds City
	Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Substitutes	Peter Britcliffe	Hyndburn BC
Apologies	William Nunn	Breckland Council
	John Taylor	Northumberland
Observers/Other attendees	Cllr Paul Bettison	LGA Conservative National Lead Peer
	Philip Sellwood	Energy Savings Trust
	Richard Priestman	De Montford University
	Shehla Husain	Department for Communities and Local Government
LGA Officers	Dennis Skinner, Howard Davis, Mark Edgell, Rachel Litherland, Marianne Abley, Brian Reynolds, Ivor Wells, Pascoe Sawyers and Gesche Schmid	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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**Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed Members, observers, guest speakers and officers to the meeting and informed the Board of those apologies that had been received.

**1.a Sector-led Improvement**

Dennis Skinner (Head of Leadership and Productivity) briefly outlined the report, which asked Members to comment on the draft single overarching framework publication for the sector’s approach to sector-led improvement. The framework brought together the work of the Children’s Improvement Board, the Towards Excellence in Council’s Adult Social Care Board and the Improvement Board. The report also provided an update on progress made around Peer Challenge and LG Inform.

Shehla Husain from the Department for Communities and Local Government (Deputy Director, Accountability and Transparency) commented from a government perspective on the sector-led approach to improvement. She emphasised Ministers’ support for sector ownership of improvement and pointed towards a cultural shift in the relationship between central and local government. In terms of taking this approach forward, she emphasised the importance of building on the strong foundations of transparency, accountability and trust between the local government sector and Government.

A detailed discussion followed, in which Members made a number of comments which were responded to by the Principal Advisers, relating to issues including:

- There was support for the draft framework and the principle of bringing together the improvement activities of children’s and adults services with that of the Improvement Board.
- With reference to the framework’s broad target audience, Members discussed the need to tailor the communications and marketing strategy appropriately to encourage buy-in at local authority level. In addition to targeting Leaders and Chief Executives, Members felt it would be important to circulate the framework to audit and scrutiny chairs.
- Cautious optimism was expressed about a gradual shift towards a more interdependent relationship between the sector and the inspectorates (in particular Ofsted and CQC).



- Whilst Members felt strongly that the local government sector should lead on the sector-led improvement agenda, they acknowledged the need to carefully balance the LGA's dual role as a membership organisation and its responsibilities as the national body overseeing the sector-led improvement framework.
- Members discussed the benefits of a combined national and regional approach to sector improvement, noting that the variations in ambition and capacity at regional level meant that how this worked out in practice was likely to differ from region to region.

### **Decisions**

*That the Board:*

- i. **endorsed** *the draft framework publication for discussion with the Children's Improvement Board and Towards Excellence in Councils Adult Social Care Board;*
- ii. **asked** *that their comments regarding the draft framework be taken into consideration;*
- iii. **agreed** *that the Improvement Board Lead Members be authorised to approve the final publication; and*
- iv. **noted** *progress made in respect of Peer Challenge and LG Inform.*

### **Action**

Finalise the framework publication in the light of discussions and seek Lead Members' approval.

Dennis Skinner

## **1.b Future Arrangements for Audit**

The Chairman updated Members on the outcome of an LGA – Audit Commission (AC) liaison meeting, following the results of the AC's process to procure local public audit. Whilst welcoming the savings of £250 million over five-years, the LGA Group Leaders had sought assurances that the 40 per cent saving would apply to all local authorities. Further clarity was still required regarding the arrangements for managing the audit contracts once the Commission had been abolished and for then procuring local public audit after the expiry of the 5 year contracts.

With reference to the abolition of the AC, LGA group leaders had signalled their interest in exploring whether the sector would want to jointly procure audit in the future, and if so how.

### **Decision**

*That the Board **noted** the update.*

## **1.c Pan-Africa Peer Review Programme**

Ivor Wells (Adviser) provided Members with an update on the Pan-African Peer Review Project, which had received high profile national and international media coverage. In doing so, he outlined the overall programme timetable and highlighted the potential role for the LGA in future international peer review projects. Members were invited to comment on the progress of the project and on upcoming activities.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made a number of comments and questions, which were responded to by Ivor Wells, relating to issues including:

- In discussing the peer training programme, Members were assured that the programme included health and safety training as well as information about the wider economic, social and political context of the countries in which the peers would be operating.
- Members emphasised the importance of tapping into existing knowledge and skills within the sector to help support the programme of work.

### **Decisions**

*That the Board:*

- noted** the report ; and*
- asked** that their comments be taken into consideration in the development of the programme.*

### **Action**

Officers to continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and taking into account Members' comments.

Ivor Wells / Andy  
Bates

## 2. Leadership and Localism Progress Report: March 2012

Pascoe Sawyers (Principal Advisor – Leadership) briefly outlined the report which updated Members on progress made in developing and delivering the Leadership and Localism programme of work. In particular he drew Members' attention to the development of master classes as a specific offer for Leadership Academy alumni and the completion of regionally based induction events for new councillors. Members were invited to comment on the delivery of this programme and to make recommendations regarding its future direction.

In the following discussion, Members raised several issues which were responded to by Pascoe Sawyers, including:

- The lead member for Leadership pointed towards ongoing planning for the 2012/13 work programme and noted the intention to bring a report on the future leadership offer to the Board in due course.
- Members discussed the potential for developing 'regionally specific offers' to member councils so that the programme was not seen as London centric.
- Members commented on the 2012/13 work programme and suggested several additional priorities for inclusion in the future work programme.

### **Decisions**

*That the Board:*

- noted the report;*
- asked that their comments be taken into consideration in the development of the programme; and*
- asked that a report on the development of the future Leadership work programme and 'offer' to councils be brought to a future meeting.*

### **Actions**

Officers to continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and taking into account Members' comments. Pascoe Sawyers

Bring a report on the development of the future Leadership work programme and 'offer' to councils to a future meeting. Pascoe Sawyers

### 3. **Productivity Programme: 2012/13 Work Programme and Update**

Brian Reynolds (Productivity) briefly outlined the report, which updated Members on the progress made in delivering the Productivity Programme. In particular, he invited Members' views on: asset management; troubled families; shared service; and the Government's Procumbent Pledge.

A detailed discussion followed, in which Members made a number of comments, which were responded to by Brian Reynolds, relating to issues including:

- Several concerns were raised about the current approach to dealing with troubled families – including whether the ambition was achievable; the problems with payments to councils in arrears and the need to have a better understanding of what best practice looks like and how it can be shared.
- In discussing the direction of the shared services agenda, Members highlighted the need to move beyond shared back office functions and develop a more innovative approach to public service transformation. Suggestions included a 'whole scale change' approach to public service delivery, such as 'whole place' community budgets.
- In relation to the Capital Assets Programme, Members emphasised the importance of supporting local authorities with infrastructure investment as a means for stimulating economic growth and encouraged the use of private sector assets as well as public sector ones.
- In discussing the Government's draft Procurement Pledge, Members raised serious concerns regarding a significant number of issues within the Pledge. There was unanimous support for developing a local government Procurement Pledge that better reflected the strengths and aspirations of the sector rather than sign the Government's draft Pledge.

#### **Decisions**

*That the Board:*

- noted** the progress made in the delivery of the existing productivity programme;*
- agreed** to develop a local government Pledge rather than sign the Government's Procurement Pledge; and*

- iii. *asked that their comments be taken into consideration in the development of the programme.*

### **Actions**

Develop a local government Procurement Pledge. Brian Reynolds

Continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and taking into account Members' comments. Brian Reynolds

## **4. Creative Councils Update**

The Chairman briefly outlined the report which updated Members on progress with the Creative Councils innovation programme. He commented on the selection process, which would take place between April and May, and outlined the next steps, including disseminating the information to a wider audience. Members were invited to comment on the update and the forward work programme.

With reference to the financial costs associated with disseminating the information to a wider audience, Members discussed the budget for the joint funded project and the potential need for further investment.

### **Decision**

*That the Board **noted** the update.*

## **5.a Resident Satisfaction Questions: LGA Consultation**

Dennis Skinner briefly outlined the report which updated Members on the development of a proposed set of questions and accompanying guidance that the sector could use to collect broadly comparable data on resident satisfaction.

Member discussed the value of comparable data and the costs associated with the proposed work. They wished to be reassured about the demand in the sector for this work.

### **Decision**

*That this work be taken forward in the light of consultation responses and Members' views.*

## Action

Develop the way forward in the light of responses to the consultation and Members' views.

Juliet Whitworth

### 5.b Update on Transparency: March 2012

Gesche Schmid (Function Lead: Geographical Information Policy) summarised the report which provided an update on ongoing work related to transparency and on the issue of councillor notification under the Data Protection Act. Members were invited to comment on the update.

In the following discussion, Members put forward a number of comments and questions, which were responded to by Gesche Schmid, relating to issues including:

- It was noted that there was some degree of discrepancy between the messages from the Information Commissioner's Office and from Government Ministers regarding the requirement for councillors to be independently registered under the Data Protection Act.
- Members discussed the potential for local authorities to charge a small fee for freedom of information requests.
- With reference to the single data list, Members emphasised the need to move forward with discussions with DCLG officials over setting up a gateway process to challenge future additions to the single data list and review existing returns on the list.

## Decisions

*That the Board:*

- noted** the progress made in the delivery of the Transparency Programme; and*
- asked** that their comments be taken into consideration in the development of the programme.*

## Action

Continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and taking into account Members' comments.

Juliet Whitworth

**6. Notes of the last meeting and actions arising – Confidential**

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

**7. Date of next meeting**

11.00am Tuesday, 15 May 2012





## Action Monitor Schedule

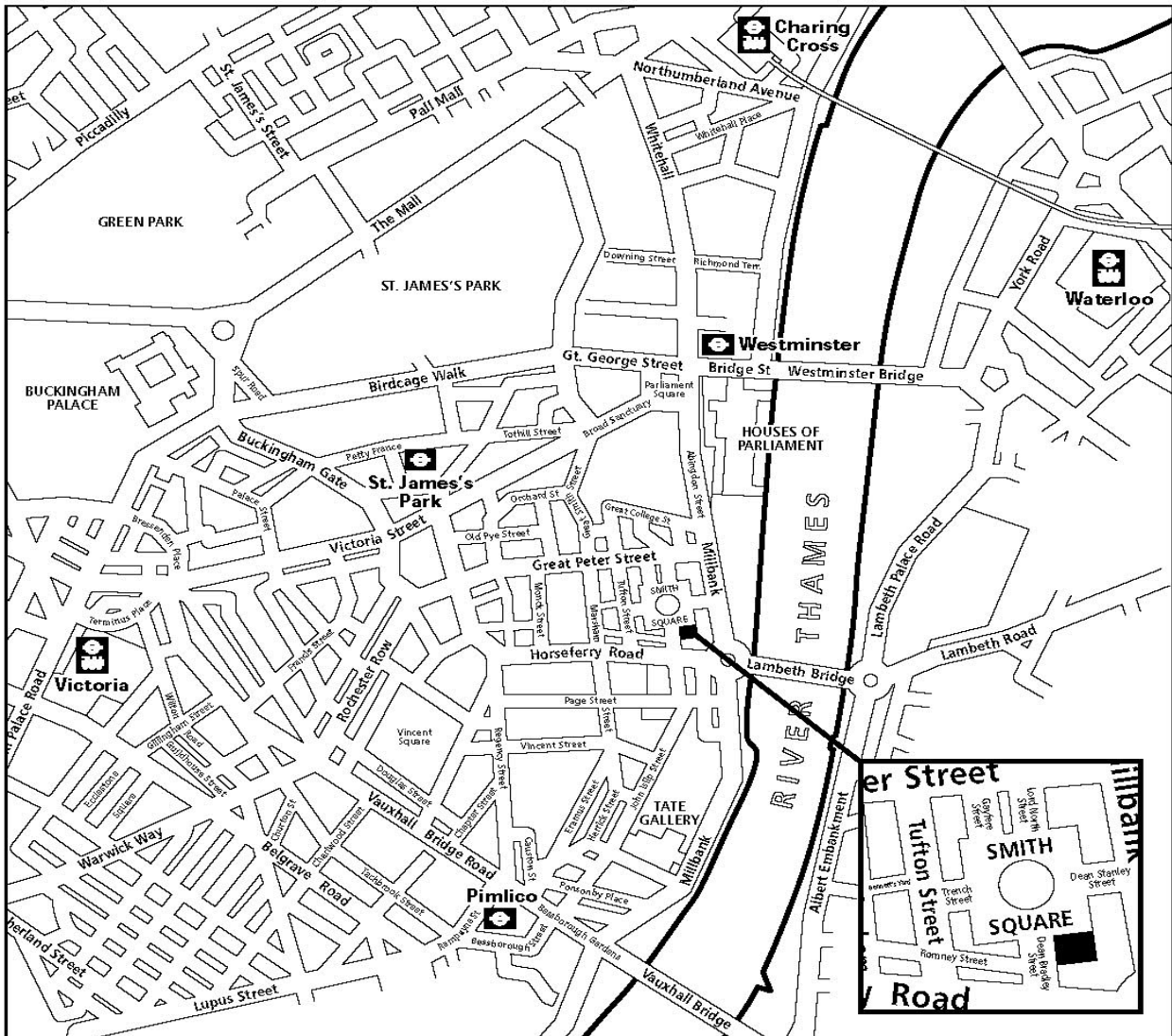
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<b>Title:</b>	Improvement Board
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 20 March 2012
<b>Venue:</b>	Local Government House

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Item	Action	Progress
<b>1.a</b>	<b>Sector-led Improvement</b>	
	Framework being revised in the light of comments and will be submitted to lead members for approval.	The draft Framework has been discussed by the Childrens Improvement Board, Towards Excellence in Councils Adult Social Care Board, Community Wellbeing Board and the Advisory Board and is being revised in the light of comments and will be submitted for lead members' sign off.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Leadership and Localism Progress Report: March 2012</b>	
	Bring a report on the development of the future Leadership work programme and 'offer' to councils to a future meeting.	Report submitted to May Board on Leadership 2012/13 Programme of Events.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Productivity Programme: 2012/13 Work Programme and Update</b>	
	Develop a local government Procurement Pledge.	A draft Local Government Procurement Pledge has now been developed. This is referred to in the May Board report. The draft Pledge is out for consultation until 8 June 2012.
<b>5.a</b>	<b>Resident Satisfaction Questions: LGA Consultation</b>	
	Develop the way forward in the light of responses to the consultation and Members' views.	The consultation has now closed, with over 120 detailed responses received. A proposed way forward will be developed on the basis of these responses and taking into account feedback from the March Improvement Board. This will be submitted to the July Board for Members' consideration.

## LGA Location Map



### Local Government Association

Local Government House  
 Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ  
 Tel: 020 7664 3131  
 Fax: 020 7664 3030  
 Email: [info@lga.gov.uk](mailto:info@lga.gov.uk)  
 Website: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

### Public transport

**Local Government House** is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are;

#### Victoria

and **Waterloo**; the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (District and Circle Lines); **Westminster** (District, Circle and Jubilee Lines); and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line), all about 10 minutes walk away. Buses **3** and **87** travel along **Millbank**, and the **507** between Victoria and Waterloo goes close by at the end of **Dean Bradley Street**.

#### Bus routes - Millbank

**87** Wandsworth - Aldwych **N87**  
**3** Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

### Bus routes - Horseferry Road

**507** Waterloo - Victoria  
**C10** Elephant and Castle - Pimlico - Victoria  
**88** Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

### Cycling Facilities

Cycle racks are available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

### Central London Congestion Charging Zone

Local Government House is located within the congestion charging zone. For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at [www.cclondon.com](http://www.cclondon.com)

### Car Parks

**Abingdon Street Car Park**  
 Great College Street  
**Horseferry Road Car Park**  
 Horseferry Road/Arneway Street