

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Improvement Board
Date: Monday 17 September 2012
Time: 11.00 am – 1.00 pm
Venue: Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council / Representing
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
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
	William Nunn	Breckland Council
	Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
	Glen Milller	Bradford City
	Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
	Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
	Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Rory Palmer	Leicester City
	Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
	Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
Substitutes	Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Council
	David Mackintosh	Northampton BC
Apologies	Michael White	Havering LB
	Judith Blake	Leeds City
Observers/Other attendees	Philip Sellwood	Energy Savings Trust
	Richard Priestman	Lombard
	Melani Oliver	NESTA
LGA Officers	Michael Coughlin, Dennis Skinner, Pascoe Sawyers, Brian Reynolds, Juliet Whitworth, Kate Hills	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed new and existing members, observers and guest speakers from Monmouthshire CC and Cornwall Council.

Cllr Ruth Cadbury gave apologies from Cllr Judith Black and informed the Board that Cllr Black would become a Lead Member Peer. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Black to attend the Board in her new capacity.

The Chairman gave apologies for Cllr Michael White and welcomed back Sir David Williams CBE.

1 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Stay declared interests as a trustee of the Leadership Centre and as an employee of Deloitte.

2 Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Body Appointments for 2012/13

The Chairman introduced the item, highlighting that the LGA has approved the Board's change of name to the Improvement and Innovation Board.

The Chairman asked members to nominate themselves to the priority area groups by emailing Frances Marshall, Member Services Support Officer and said that Lead Members could provide more information if needed. He invited all substitute members to the Board meetings and to sit on the priority area groups.

Cllr Ruth Cadbury highlighted some confusion around the similarity of the names of the Leadership Board and the Leadership Academy.

Action

Michael Coughlin to look into the naming of the Leadership Board and the Leadership Academy.

Michael Coughlin

Decision

*The Board **noted** the membership for 2012/13, the terms of reference, appointments to outside bodies and the change of Board name.*

3 Creative Councils Update

The Chairman introduced the Creative Councils guest speakers: Cllr Bob Greenland, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Modernisation and Enterprise and Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer for Regeneration and Culture from Monmouthshire CC and Cllr Alec Robertson, Leader of the Council

and Paul Masters, Assistant Chief Executive from Cornwall Council.

Cllr Greenland introduced Monmouthshire's approach to addressing funding reductions. He highlighted that the council rejected salami-slicing in favour of an outcomes-based approach and recruited a new management team who had a new vision and who inspired confidence and trust.

Kellie Beirne presented the 'Your County Your Way' programme which includes community-led engagement with the council through a community interest company, a shared IT solution across the public sector, and social care services co-designed and delivered with residents. They are creating cultural and behavioural change, engaging meaningfully with the local community and embedding innovation. Outcomes include a shift to stronger bottom-up and less risk-adverse approaches and improved community resilience. Kellie highlighted a role for councillors in networking and sharing learning.

Cllr Robertson outlined the deep cuts Cornwall Council implemented without reducing services. The Council has turned failing services around and is now seeing cultural change.

Paul Masters outlined the 'Shaped by Us' online platform which identifies local challenges and allows communities to propose creative and innovative solutions to work together on tackling these issues. This demonstrates a shift from inward- to outward-looking approaches and a move away from the presumption that the local authority knows best. The council is looking to scale up the initiative and would welcome LGA support in connecting to other local authorities, potentially linking to LG Inform and through pressing DCLG for a small innovation fund.

Members were grateful for the inspiring presentations and discussed:

- how to disseminate the learning from and value of these programmes, including promoting the savings which can be achieved through such innovation. Members could play a role in sharing with the sector. It was felt that seeing projects on the ground and engaging face to face rather than wholly relying on reports ensures the biggest impact. Showcasing good work also goes towards establishing trust of local authorities.
- the possibility of offering peers to sense check and help further develop the initiatives. There were also suggestions of a peer challenge on innovation and an improvement and innovation conference.
- the decision-making approaches of these programmes and how success is measured.
- Members echoed the importance of behavioural change, strong political leadership, allowing space and permission to think differently, becoming less risk-adverse and embracing external ideas.
- Gill Shortland offered to follow up with DCLG on the innovation fund.

In response, Kellie added that measuring approaches are often outmoded and that different metrics are needed for innovative projects and programmes. Cllr Robertson said that Cornwall Council has two-way open conversations with communities rather than traditional consultations. Cllr Greenland stressed the importance of having a strong business case to ensure buy-in from members on innovative programmes.

The Chairman informed members that the other Creative Councils were attending other LGA Boards to disseminate innovative work across programme areas. He questioned whether the leadership offer and training for officers and members could create a space for Creative Councils to get involved.

The Chairman discussed providing LGA support in connecting Cornwall Council to other authorities and said the Board would keep in touch and continue to support all Creative Councils. He thanked the guests, which was echoed by members.

4 Baseline evaluation of sector-led improvement

The Chairman welcomed Juliet Whitworth, Research and Information Manager and Kate Hills, Analyst from the LGA Research Team.

Juliet Whitworth introduced the paper, saying that work on the baseline information was continuing, with expected completion in October. She outlined the aims of the evaluation and that there will be a number of reports to react to the findings. Kate Hills outlined the key findings.

The Chairman thanked the officers and members discussed:

- the need to promote this work and ensure awareness across the sector.
- the confidence indicators and difference between, for example, 'great' and 'moderate', for example. Juliet Whitworth understood the importance of the interview questions and said the full report would examine the results in more detail.
- the importance of driving behavioural change at local authorities, promoting sector-led improvement and innovation as a necessity rather than an option, ensuring coherent and strong relationships at local, regional and national levels and engaging with poor performers in order to drive change.
- encouraging more take-up of the free Leadership Academy places.
- Members suggested exploring public engagement in peer challenges and creating a communications peer challenge. There was also some concern about member peer capacity.
- Members discussed the road shows in November and December and the possibility of inviting all councils and the political groups as well

as ensuring the road shows themselves are innovative.

- On the publication of peer challenge reports, members discussed the implications of local authorities not sharing their peer challenge reports, which can affect feelings of transparency and honesty and therefore confidence of the sector. There is a need to balance good practice and compulsory improvement approaches, agree ground rules on publicising the peer challenge reports and to steer authorities towards publishing and that the LGC's comments on authorities not sharing reports should be robustly challenged. The Chairman said this discussion could be brought back to a future item.

Decision

*The Board **noted** the report.*

Action

Dennis Skinner and Michael Coughlin / Juliet Whitworth to look at the full implications on inviting political groups and group leaders to the road shows.

Dennis Skinner
Michael Coughlin
Juliet Whitworth

Peer challenge report discussion to be added as a discussion item at a future Board.

5 Productivity Programme

Brian Reynolds introduced the item, saying that the shared service report was delayed and would be brought back to a future Board.

Members discussed the need for clear and measurable outcomes, consideration of the political dimension, the extent of DWP's engagement and concern over some local authorities disengaging from early implementation of shared services. Cllr Gill Shortland offered her assistance in connecting with DWP.

Brian Reynolds said that the political dimension had not specifically been looked at but that in the Tri-Boroughs report, for example, it was clear which services local authorities were prepared to share. He said that DWP are involved in the Fighting Fraud Locally Board and will be critically involved in sharing data and information.

The Chairman thanked Brian Reynolds.

Action

Shared services report to be added as a discussion item to a future Board.

6 **Leadership & Localism: Update on recruitment to ngdp, Leeds Castle and Next Generation programmes**

Pascoe Sawyers introduced the paper, highlighting the decision to change the name of the Leeds Castle programme. A new name is pending.

Members said that the name change could provide a good opportunity to review and refresh the programme and enable public sector involvement in leadership programme development. There was concern at the level of engagement with the North West and the ngdp.

Pascoe Sawyers said that a big effort had been made to encourage areas outside of London to engage with the ngdp and that some local authorities want to recruit directly to ensure a boost for young people in the local economy.

The Chairman added that there had been a positive increase in ngdp trainees from last year but understood the geographic issues. He urged members to ensure their groups are represented and would encourage the group offices to discuss and promote the ngdp regionally.

Cllr Richard Stay offered to work with Pascoe Sawyers on encouraging a broader geographic spread of graduates.

Chairman thanked Pascoe Sawyers.

Decision

*The Board **noted** the composition of the 2012 programmes.*

7 **Notes of the last meeting**

The Board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting. On Item 3 of the actions monitoring schedule, Cllr Stay said that the costs circulated detailed expenditure costs only, not including overheads and staffing costs. The Chairman flagged it as a potential Resources Panel issue.

Dennis Skinner said that officers are looking at this issue. He reminded members that the next Board would be a joint meeting with the Children and Young People Board.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and suggested booking Bevin Hall with microphones for the joint meeting as well as the usual room for any specific Improvement and Innovation Board meeting requirements.