Local Government Association

Improvement Board

Agenda

Monday 17 September 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

Guidance notes for visitors
Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

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Please read these notes for your own safety and that of all visitors, staff and tenants.

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Please don't forget to sign out at reception and return your badge when you depart.

Local Government Association

Improvement Board
17 September 2012

The **Improvement Board** meeting will be held on **Monday 17 September 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
Conservative:	Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: 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)

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Improvement Board - Membership 2012/2013

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (8)	
Peter Fleming [Chair]	Sevenoaks DC
Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
Michael White	Havering LB
Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
William Nunn	Breckland Council
Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
Tony Jackson* [substitute 2011/2012]	East Herts Council
Glen Miller*	Bradford City
Substitutes:	
Chris Hayward**	Three Rivers DC
Peter Jackson**	Northumberland Council
David Mackintosh**	Northampton BC
Barry Wood**	Cherwell DC
Labour (6)	
Ruth Cadbury **[Deputy Chair]**	Hounslow LB
Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
Helen Holland	Bristol City
Judith Blake	Leeds City
Rory Palmer*	Leicester City
Substitutes:	
Theo Blackwell	Camden LB
Liberal Democrat (3)	
Jill Shortland OBE **[Vice Chair]**	Somerset CC
Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Sir David Williams CBE* [Substitute 2011/12]	Richmond upon Thames LB
Substitute:	
TBA	
Independent (1)	
Jeremy Webb **[Deputy Chair]**	East Lindsey DC

* new member
** new substitute

Substitute	
Angela Lawrence**	Vale of White Horse DC
+ 1 tbc	
Observers	
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***

* new member 2012/2013

Improvement Board

Monday 17 September 2012

11.00am

Smith Square Rooms 3 & 4, Local Government House, London

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

Purpose of report

To ask the Improvement Board to note its Membership, Terms of Reference and the Outside Bodies appointments for 2012/13 and ask individual members to consider working on one of the Board's five priority areas.

Summary

The Board's Membership (**Appendix A**), Terms of Reference (**Appendix B**) and nominations to Outside Bodies (**Appendix C**) are attached to this report. The amended section of the term of reference is underlined.

Members are invited to consider working on at least one of the Board's five priority areas: Improvement, Transparency, Innovation, Leadership and Productivity. Members' preferences will be canvassed by email after the first Board meeting, with the level of involvement being flexible depending on the individual. Board Members' preferences for 2011/12 are attached at **Appendix D** for information.

Recommendation

That the Improvement Board notes its Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Bodies appointments for 2012/13.

Action

Officers to canvass Members' preferences regarding working on at least one of the Board's five priority areas.

Contact officer:	Frances Marshall
Position:	Programme Support Officer (Member Services)
Phone no:	020 7664 3220
E-mail:	frances.marshall@local.gov.uk

Appendix A - Improvement Board - Membership 2012/2013

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (8)	
Peter Fleming [Chair]	Sevenoaks DC
Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
Michael White	Havering LB
Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
William Nunn	Breckland Council
Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
Glen Miller	Bradford City
Substitutes:	
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Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames LB
Independent (1)	
Jeremy Webb **[Deputy Chair]**	East Lindsey DC
Substitute	
Angela Lawrence	Vale of White Horse DC

Observers	
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

Appendix B – Improvement Board Terms of Reference and Remit

1. The purpose of the Improvement Board is to provide strategic oversight of all the Local Government Association's (LGA) policy and improvement activity in relation to councils improving their performance and productivity and in relation to localism - in line with the LGA priorities.

2. In doing so it will work closely with the LGA Boards on the performance of the sector in their subject areas and the arrangements they are putting in place to provide improvement support. The board will provide strategic direction to the sector's own improvement architecture, for example, successor bodies to the regional improvement and efficiency partnerships (RIEPs); the Children's Improvement Board and the Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care board (TEASC).

3. Boards should seek to involve councillors in supporting the delivery of these priorities. This can be through task groups, rural and urban commissions, special interest groups (SIGs), regional networks and other means of wider engagement. They are operating essentially as the centre of a network connecting to all councils and drawing on the expertise of key advisors from the sector.

4. The Improvement Board will be responsible for:

    4.1 Developing a thorough understanding of council priorities and performance across the width of councils' responsibilities, using strong networks and robust information.

    4.2 Helping to shape the LGA Business plan by ensuring the priorities of the sector are fed into the process.

    4.3 Overseeing a programme of work to deliver the strategic priorities set by the LGA Executive, covering lobbying and campaigns, research and or policy, good practice, improvement support and events - as specified in the business plan, taking into account linkages with other policy boards where appropriate.

    4.4 Representational and lobbying activities on behalf of the LGA and responsibility for the promulgation of activity through public statements in its areas of responsibility.

    4.5 Building and maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders.

5. The Improvement Board may:

    5.1 appoint members to relevant outside bodies in accordance with guidance in the Political Conventions.

    5.2 appoint member 'champions' where appropriate (who must be a current member of the Board) on key issues, with responsibility for liaising with portfolio holders on key issues that require rapid response and contact with councils.

Appendix C – Improvement Board Outside Body Appointments for 2012/13

Organisation	Background	Representative for 2012/13	Allowances/ Expenses	Previous Member appointment for 2011/12
Urban Commission Steering Committee	The Urban Commission provides a forum LGA for member authorities whose areas are wholly or partly urban. The Urban Commission will act in a way that complements the principals of the LGA as a whole.	**Cllr Tony McDermott (Labour)**	No expenses or allowance paid	Cllr Tony McDermott (Labour)
Rural Commission	Provides the forum within the Association for member authorities with an interest in rural affairs.	**Cllr William Nunn (Conservative)**	No expenses or allowance paid.	Cllr William Nunn (Conservative)
LGA Member Champion - Social inclusion and equalities	Advocate and key speaker for social inclusion and equalities issues.	**Cllr Edward Lord JP (Liberal Democrat)**	No expenses or allowance paid.	Cllr Edward Lord JP (Liberal Democrat)

Appendix D – Improvement Board Priority Areas – Member Preferences for 2011/12

Priority Area	Councillor
Productivity	Ruth Cadbury **(Lead)**
	Tim Cheetham
	Tony McDermott
Transparency	Tim Cheetham **(Lead)**
Improvement	Jill Shortland/Jeremy Webb **(Lead)**
	Teresa O'Neill
	Judith Blake
Innovation	Peter Fleming **(Lead)**
	Rod Bluh
	William Nunn
	Tony McDermott
	Helen Holland
Leadership	Richard Stay **(Lead)**
	Rod Bluh
	William Nunn
	Helen Holland

Creative Councils Update

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report updates the Board on progress made by Monmouthshire County Council and Cornwall Council with their respective Creative Councils projects and raises discussion points from each project for consideration by members.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the project updates and to discuss points arising from the presentations to be made by Monmouthshire County Council and Cornwall Council.

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	Adviser
Phone nos:	07799 038432	07879 640823
E-mail:	mike.short@local.gov.uk	teresa.payne@local.gov.uk

Creative Councils Update

Background

1. The Creative Councils programme is a joint programme between 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.

Programme Progress to date

2. Six Creative Councils were selected to go forward under Phase 2 of the programme and are receiving financial and non-financial support to help them progress their work. Monmouthshire and Cornwall are attending to present their respective progress and to raise discussion points for consideration by members.

    2.1   Monmouthshire is implementing 'Your County Your Way', a cultural transformation programme within the council to listen and respond more creatively to the needs of its communities. Central to this approach is an internal training programme, the Intrapreneurship School, which seeks to introduce council employees to the concept of innovation and what it means for service delivery.

    2.2   Cornwall is implementing 'Shaped by Us', a technology platform and open innovation approach which makes it easier for local communities to put forward creative ideas to solve the county's biggest challenges, a number of which will be co-produced with the council.

3. Rotherham and Stoke are to attend a meeting of the Economy and Transport Board on a date to be confirmed.

    3.1   Rotherham are developing 'Rotherham Ready', a council-backed social enterprise that works with the teachers of students aged 4-19 to engage them and their schools in the development of an enterprise-based curriculum, ensuring young people have skills relevant for the future.

    3.2   Stoke are developing their goal to become an energy sufficient 'Great Working City', pushing the boundaries of energy regulation and localism by moving towards local ownership of energy supply and re-imagining the role of the council as a strategic broker of resources.

4.   Derbyshire are to attend Children and Young People Board on 21 January.

    4.1   Derbyshire are developing 'Uni-fi' a bespoke package of support aimed at developing aspiration amongst young people in care. This will include a guaranteed entitlement to financial support on leaving care to be spent on the pursuit of self-selected goals, which might include further education or training.

5.   Wigan are to attend a meeting of the Community and Well-Being Board on a date to be confirmed.

    5.1   Wigan are creating a new economic model for social care to meet their service and financial challenges, by harnessing underutilised and untapped resources within the local community through volunteering and the development of micro-enterprises.

Progress by Cornwall and Monmouthshire

6.   Cllr Bob Greenland, (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Modernisation and Enterprise) and Kellie Beirne, (Chief Officer for Regeneration and Culture) will present Monmouthshire's 'Your County, Your Way' project.

7.   Cllr Alec Robertson, Leader of the Council and Paul Masters, Assistant Chief Executive will present Cornwall's 'Shaped by Us' project.

8.   Presentations from both councils will cover their respective progress and will raise discussion points to be considered by members, in particular any asks of the LGA in supporting the resolution of any identified issues or barriers. Further details of Cornwall's project are included in **Appendix A** and that of Monmouthshire is included in **Appendix B.**

Conclusion

9.   This is an exciting and interesting programme that offers many lessons for the local government sector in how best to innovate.

Appendix A - Cornwall Council – 'Shaped.By.Us

1. Shaped.By.Us was established in 2012 by the Council with the support of the LGA and NESTA under the Creative Councils programme. Shaped.By.Us is a web portal that is designed to encourage communities to come up with new ways of delivering services in their immediate locality. The Council is actively supporting the concept by working in partnership with local communities to overcome current and future challenges.

2. The concept of Shaped.By.Us is based on people listing a challenge or problem that they need assistance with under the following themes:
   - Homes & Neighbourhoods;
   - Public Services;
   - Environment & Infrastructure;
   - Education & Skills;
   - Work & Economy;
   - Health & Care; and
   - Cross Themed

3. In addition, there are a range of over 50 tags (sub-themes) e.g. sports, health, energy saving, that users can attach challenges to.

4. Visitors to the website can search for challenges by either theme, tag or geographical area (based on Localism area). The aim is for a solution to the challenge to be identified, this can be achieved in various ways, namely:
   - Organic growth of ideas, via increased visibility of your challenge as 'critical mass' of following increases as more people visit the website. This can then result in on and off-line support to overcome a challenge (in the form of events, activities, petitions etc);
   - Generation of sponsorship (monetary or 'in-kind') to deliver an idea to overcome a challenge. One example of this could be for a community and the council to work together in partnership to realise economies of scale and generate bulk savings e.g. implementation of a community green energy scheme.

5. The challenge the Council (and the rest of the public sector) is facing is to find better ways of delivering local public services for significantly less, as budgets are shrinking. This scenario makes the task of improvement significantly more difficult to implement.

6. Our experience at Cornwall Council is that by developing innovative schemes such as Shaped.By.Us, in partnership with Creative Councils, has positively energised our teams in these difficult times to work in partnership with our local communities to overcome the challenges that face us. As a result of our experiences so far, we have identified the following recommendations around what has worked so far and also what has not.

7. **Keep it simple and do it now**
   In terms of implementing innovative solutions, it is best to be practical and deliver methods for sharing ideas as quickly as possible. We have called this approach 'Thinking Room' – where we create time and space to think and thus share ideas to generate new solutions to problems. We have found this to be an effective way of channelling energy and ideas to create optimal solutions, rather than jumping into radical new solutions - which although well intentioned may not be effectively delivered due to insufficient planning.

8. This approach flows from our work with the Design Council, through Dott Cornwall to bring together local communities and world-class designers to work on projects that improve how we live, work and play. It is also based on best practice from both the public and private sectors, where the two way flow of information between management and the floor has often resulted in innovative solutions to long-standing problems.

9. **Turn conventional wisdom on its head**
   By turning things on their head you can get a new perspective. For example, it is commonly accepted that to solve a problem, we need to target additional resources to overcome the particular challenge. However, in the current economic climate, this approach is often not practical. A lack of investment can then lead to much greater propagation and sharing of ideas. This capability is probably always with us but it is probably the lack of organisational infrastructure allowing us to 'channel' our ideas and allow them to be transformed into positive solutions.

10. It is our view that the Shaped.By.Us portal will fill exactly this void and act as a hub for people to share problems and generate solutions to overcome them.

11. **Don't set up an innovation unit**
    We believe it is not a good idea to set up a team of specialist innovators. This can lead to innovators outside of the specialist group feeling marginalised and possibly less integration of novel ideas across organisational boundaries.

12. Previous organisational structures have been based around centralising specialist expertise in one place. This approach has often worked well but not necessarily in a prompt manner. To be successful we recognise that a culture of innovation within the Council needs to be created, so we can take a leadership role and work as skilled equals in innovation with community partners, partner contractors and suppliers. This should then enable solutions to problems to be cultivated in a rapid manner, as befits the challenging environment we now find ourselves in.

13. **Don't invest in innovation, invest in fresh thinking**
    Rather than focus our attention on the final innovative solution, it is more important to focus on the organisational and social culture that has facilitated the development of the innovation. It is easy to generate ideas; however it is much harder making them happen unless the organisation's culture supports the change as part of its everyday

business. It is vital that this culture is extended to allow the Council to work effectively with our community partners to make good ideas happen.

14. **Common sense, honesty and passion are critical ingredients**
We believe that all Council staff should be encouraged to be innovative where appropriate, in their day to day duties. Fresh thinking and appropriate risk taking by staff can enable both transition to be realised and an enhanced level of satisfaction for our customers and partners. In the future we will need staff that can be creative thinkers, willing to be bold and take responsibility for making change happen.

15. **Broaden your horizons, seek diverse viewpoints and build alliances**
We are extremely fortunate to live in a networked age. Networks support like-mindedness but also encourage experimentation and diversity regardless of boundaries – the Creative Councils programme is an excellent example of this.

16. We believe that we will become much better at understanding the problems our communities and service-users face, by providing a hub which brings all of these parties together and enables innovation to be devolved and shared.

17. By developing portals such as Thinking Room and Shaped by Us, we have created platforms for innovation that are open to all and thus enable us to build alliances and broaden our horizons so that ultimately we can make Cornwall one of the best places in the world to live work and play.

Appendix B - Monmouthshire County Council - 'Your County, Your Way'

1. *The problem.*
   As society has evolved so demand has increased for 24-7, accessible and personalised services which they, as users, can help shape and influence. Often however, where there is a combination of hierarchical structures and risk-adverse culture it may result in difficulties to adapt at a pace to fulfil such expectations of 21st century public services. Energy is often internally focussed with an assumption that every service user wants or needs the same services with a pre-occupation of *how* to get things done rather than with *what* gets done. This can result in a dispiriting and frustrating existence for both service users and providers where often the services fail to transform people's lives.

2. *The solution.*
   In Monmouthshire, we recognise the onus is on us to make the first move and to narrow the gap between our council and community. To improve our relevance and vitality to our community, we are trying to create an organisational culture that institutionalises innovation, supports flexibility, responsiveness and networks and enables us to build a meaningful connection with all communities, so we can better understand their needs and priorities. Cultural transformation is at the heart of our programme because we recognise the problem cannot be tackled with a service change or improvement. Our programme seeks to tackle the root cause of the problem and not just the symptoms, making it inherently replicable and repeatable.

3. We are changing our internal system to ensure communities can access and shape their county on their terms, because re-positioning our organisation as an agent for change on things that matter today, will prepare our organisation to be relevant in responding to the things we can realistically foresee as being important tomorrow. This means unleashing the intrinsic motivation of our people and creating a permissive environment focussed on enabling delivery of outstanding outcomes and 'new ends'. We believe that building a light and permeable organisation that has torn down the walls between 'in' and 'out and makes success more likely to happen at the required pace and scale.

4. We have therefore developed 'new means' which are helping to transform the way we work. We call these our *5 positive interventions* and they are:
   - *+Creating an agile and networked organisation* that sees the right people working on the right things at the right time. To help do all staff have access to social media in order to create a fully agile working environment and we have adopted the Open Government Licence;
   - *+Promoting the spread of systems thinking and doing* because our experience tells us operating in silos does not deliver and things work best when we understand whole-systems linkages. We have done this through programmes

of cross-cutting reviews which instead of focussing around departments or themes, focus on place;

- **+Establishing a new Intrapreneurship School** that provides mixed cohorts of officers with the innovation tools, techniques and training to engage in developing the creative solutions needed to transform key areas of our business;
- **+Encouraging our people to 'go find, come play'** and seek out global best practice in order to develop next practice through developing new networks, participating in trade missions and working more collaboratively; and,
- **+Establishing effective listening tools** such as 'open space technology' that allow us to take part in more meaningful community-led engagement

5. *The evidence*
    The principal evidence-base underpinning our project is the voice of our communities. We have, therefore, developed our programme from evidence accumulated through our learning and have backed it up with intelligence from other public sector organisations where their experience resonates with ours.

6. We are getting positive feedback from those officers who have been encouraged to adopt this new way of working and there are strong signs that the 'new means' are creating the conditions in which outstanding outcomes can be consistently and repeatedly delivered. Tangible results include;
    - MonmouthpediA, a world first in partnership with the WikimediA Foundation;
    - Our wholly owned £3m community interest company CMC² focussed on working with partners and places to create a new value proposition around green and digital economies;
    - Our eco-farm joint venture with celebrity Kate Humble;
    - Technology-rich learning programmes in our schools which see our children learn with IPADS not chalkboards and;
    - Our Respite Opportunities Service co-designed with scheme residents.

7. Such new tools are enabling us to engage service users much more deeply with our work and co-deliver the outcomes that matter most to them.

8. Our work so far demonstrates that the 'new means' are about giving our staff both space and permission to do better things rather than just continuing to do things better. Improvement is a given - but not enough. Our journey tells us that testing, developing and implementing the positive interventions are helping us to get into and occupy the space between local government and society, enabling us to work more effectively with our community to establish shared purpose.

9. *Making the links*
    The simple connection we have drawn is that when you apply one or more of the +positive interventions ('new means') to a manifestation of the problem, it provides staff with the permission; tools and desire to deliver the best possible outcomes.

These 'new ends' will, over time, see us closing the gap between Council and community so that we travel a parallel path and bring about the gradual restoration of our relevance and viability to them.

10. *Economic and social business case*
   The potential to scale and replicate our programme is what makes our business case so compelling and robust. We believe:
   - The scale of the problem is vast and therefore our model can apply widely in all public service contexts;
   - The costs associated with projects, plans and schemes that are not built upon the 'new means' to tackle the fundamental underlying problem, will always be at best partially abortive and waste will continually feature;
   - Working closely with community to design and deliver services that really make a difference, helps us to frame challenges in new ways and therefore unlock new resources and income generation opportunities;
   - We have begun to redefine 'human resources' as all the people who work with us to deliver value – not just the people on our payroll; and,
   - Creating a permissive environment in which people are free to have a go means they engage more deeply with their work. They bring their whole self to the task.

11. Fundamentally changing the way in which we collectively create value requires a new way of measuring the results and impact we generate. Our work as the first Council to test its progress within a new 'Social Exchange Index' led by the Big Society Network, alongside industry names in the private and third sector, will enable us to openly measure for the first time, how social our social impact really is. As importantly, we will disclose it as one number which will enable our progress over time to be totally transparent. We believe that this will improve our validity and vibrancy - making us more accountable for the work we do.

12. *Implementation*
   We believe we are already seeing strong signs that the positive interventions are capable of delivering repeatable and sustained success. However, our implementation plan is not predicated on just doing more of the same. We understand that as we scale up, we will uncover different challenges and this will undoubtedly call for different tools and techniques. Replicability is at the heart of our business case and so we want the opportunity to develop and codify the range of materials and grow our 'cookbook', so it can readily apply in a range of public service contexts. We also believe there are ways to grow our knowledge of what works by engaging with other thinking around things like community engagement because a multiplicity of methods will increase our chances of widespread success.

13. Our programme is one of innovation insurgency. The clear sense of purpose that 'Your County, Your Way' provides means that our staff does not need to check in and seek permission - they just get on and do better things. The new means and ends are all powerful contributors to our story. The real power comes when viewed as a whole

rather than in discrete parts because we are building out a story that makes sense over time. When you capture this thinking, this mind-set and desire to work meaningfully with community, into a programme of positive interventions, it explains why things are gaining traction.

14. For further information see www.yc-yw.co.uk

Sector-led improvement evaluation: baseline report

Purpose

For discussion

Summary

The baseline report of the LGA evaluation of sector-led improvement is due to be published towards the end of September 2012. This paper summarises the content of the baseline report and the key baseline findings, against which the latter stages of the evaluation will judge progress.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Action

The full baseline evaluation report will be published towards the end of September 2012.

Contact officers:	Juliet Whitworth/Kate Hills
Position:	Research and Information Manager/Analyst
Phone no:	020 7664 3287/020 7664 3274
E-mail:	juliet.whitworth@local.gov.uk/kate.hills@local.gov.uk

Item 4

Sector-led improvement evaluation: baseline report

Background

1. In November 2011, the Improvement Board approved the specification for an evaluation of sector-led improvement. The evaluation is running over a two year period, with the main aim of understanding whether, in the context of reduced resources within the sector:

    1.1   the approach to sector-led improvement has the confidence of the sector and the government and, as a result, the trust of the public;
    1.2   the sector has been able to strengthen local accountability;
    1.3   the sector is adopting the sector-led improvement approach and continues to improve with a reduced burden of inspection, and in the absence of top down performance assessment; and
    1.4   the tools offered to the sector have had a positive impact on the sector's capacity to improve itself.

2. Evaluation activity will be ongoing until the end of 2013. There are many different elements to the sector-led improvement programme and these will be evaluated to varying degrees of intensity over different timescales.

3. Reports will be delivered in three phases – a baseline in September 2012, an interim report in early 2013 and a final report towards the end of 2013. The purpose of producing three reports is to ensure that learning and feedback gained throughout the period covered by evaluation activities can be used to develop and improve the approach to sector-led improvement and the individual offers as quickly as possible.

Phase 1 Reporting September 2012	Phase 2 Reporting early 2013	Phase 3 Reporting December 2013
Baseline report	Interim report	Final report
Individual reports of elements of the offer		

4. The evaluation consists of two parts:

    4.1   overall evaluation of the **approach**; and
    4.2   evaluation of the LGA's **offer** of support to the sector.

5. In addition to this evaluation, separate evaluation activity is being undertaken to look at sector-led improvement in children's services and adult social care. To ensure a comprehensive assessment of sector-led improvement as a whole, elements of the sector-led improvement evaluation have been expanded to include questions about TEASC and CIB, where appropriate.

6. The purpose of the baseline evaluation report is to establish an initial picture, in the early stages of the sector-led improvement process. This will provide the basis against which the latter stages of the evaluation will judge the extent to which sector-led improvement is succeeding.

Baseline results

7. This section summarises the key baseline findings for those aspects of the evaluation for which results are available. These results will be reported more fully in the baseline report.

Key messages

8. For each of the evaluation objectives, the key findings from the baseline research are summarised below. Further details about the views from the perceptions audit, members of the public, chief executives and leaders and the survey of heads of policy and performance are at **Annex A**, attached.

9. Generally, it is too soon to draw conclusions on progress: this report provides an initial picture which will provide the baseline against which the interim and final evaluation reports will assess progress.

Does the approach to sector-led improvement have the confidence of the sector and the government and, as a result, the trust of the public?

10. Key stakeholders who were interviewed for this evaluation (including senior civil servants and regulators) are generally positive about sector-led improvement. The general view was that although implementation appeared to get off to a slow start, the pace of development is picking up.

11. However, a number of potential risks concerned stakeholders. First, there was a perception that there is a lack of transparency (for example, it is not mandatory to publish peer challenge reports); and secondly, there was some concern about managing the risk of underperformance (perhaps stemming from a lack of understanding of the sector's arrangements).

12. Overall, the sector itself is supportive of the approach. The survey of heads of policy and performance found that over half of respondents (59 per cent) had heard a lot or a moderate amount about the approach whilst a further 32 per cent had heard a little. The survey asked these respondents whether they think it is the right approach in the current context. Seventy five per cent agreed or strongly agreed, 16 per cent were neutral and only six per cent disagreed.

13. Awareness is also high amongst chief executives and leaders: in August 2011, 90 per cent of chief executives and 80 per cent of leaders questioned as part of a telephone survey had heard at least a little about the sector-led improvement approach.

14. A first round of polling has established the baseline for public trust – 10 per cent trust their council to a great extent and 51 per cent a fair amount. Further rounds of polling in the coming months will monitor any changes in this.

Has the sector been able to strengthen local accountability?

15. It is too early to make a judgement on this, but the survey of heads of policy and performance provides a picture of the activity that is currently ongoing.

16. Overall, it shows high levels of some engagement and accountability activities such as consulting on proposals to get feedback and ideas (91 per cent are doing this) but also identified room for improvement. For example, 70 per cent of respondents' authorities will need to improve to reach the level of local accountability and engagement with residents that each authority aspires to.

Is the sector adopting the sector-led improvement approach and continuing to improve?

17. The survey showed a high level of confidence amongst respondents in the skills and capacity of both their own authorities and of the sector to monitor its own performance and continuously improve. Ninety five per cent of respondents were confident in their own authority to a great or moderate extent, and 83 per cent for the sector.

18. It is too early to judge whether this is happening in practice; later stages of the evaluation will draw on the baseline results and an analysis of performance data to judge progress.

Have the tools offered to the sector had a positive impact on the sector's capacity to improve itself?

19. The survey of heads of policy and performance revealed differing levels of awareness of the various offers. Awareness was highest for corporate peer challenge (84 per cent were aware) and Knowledge Hub (82 per cent). Five per cent had not heard of any of the offers.

20. Respondents were fairly positive about the likely impact of the support and resources on offer on both their own authority's capacity and the sectors capacity to monitor its own performance and continuously improve.[1] For both their own authority and the sector as a whole, around two thirds of respondents thought that these will have a great or moderate positive impact (66 per cent for their authority and 67 per cent for the sector).

21. **Annex B** (attached), 'Evaluating the offer of support to the sector', outlines in greater detail the specific strengths and challenges for the individual LGA offers.

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[1] Note this question was only asked to respondents who had some awareness of the LGA's approach to sector-led improvement and/or of the resources offered by the LGA to support this.

Next steps

22. **The baseline report will be published towards the end of September 2012. The report contains findings which will inform development activity within individual offers as well as informing development of the overall approach to sector-led improvement. Therefore publication will be accompanied by a programme of dissemination activities within the organisation, to ensure that these findings are acted upon.**

Annex A: evaluating the approach to sector-led improvement

Perceptions audit

Ipsos MORI carried out ten in-depth telephone interviews with key stakeholders in sector-led improvement during June and July 2012. These comprised:

- four interviews with those working for regulators, inspectorates and third sector organisations

- six with senior civil servants across the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education and the Department of Health.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather feedback on the direction of the sector-led improvement approach and perceptions of whether the sector is able to lead its own improvement. The key findings and recommendations coming out of these interviews are summarised below. The full report will be published alongside the baseline evaluation report later in September.

Key findings

- Awareness of the approach is high, and stakeholders are positive about the idea of sector-led improvement to drive forward change and innovation in the sector.

- It was also generally thought to be the case that although the implementation of sector-led improvement appeared to get off to a slow start, changes are now being seen and the pace of development is picking up.

- However it was noticeable that at least some of the stakeholders mistakenly perceive that the LGA offer is what constitutes sector-led improvement. Rather, the LGA offer is a small part of this; at the heart of the new approach is how councils are being held more locally accountable - making information available and consulting and engaging with the public, regardless of whether this is achieved through engagement with the LGA or via other means.

- Peer challenge was the most commonly mentioned aspect of the LGA offer – peer challenges give respondents confidence as the idea of sharing excellence across the sector is seen as a key benefit of the new regime.

- However, stakeholders perceive the system to be based on voluntary participation and there were concerns as to whether this would pick up those local authorities who are not performing well. This could then pose a reputational risk to the sector – will sector-led improvement only work for good performers?

- Another risk was felt to be around transparency, with the lack of publication of data (such as peer challenges not being systematically published and LG Inform not currently being open to the public). Stakeholders perceived this to mean the system is not publicly accountable.

- It was acknowledged that sufficient capacity and resource need to be available for the system to be sustainable, particularly in these early stages when a cultural change needs to be effected in local authorities, in order to embed the new approach.

Stakeholders' suggestions for sector-led improvement

The following suggestions were made by stakeholders:

- Address the seeming lack of transparency – in particular a clear line is needed on whether peer challenge reports should <u>have</u> to be publicly available.

- Address concerns about those councils who may not choose to engage with the approach.

- Clarify triggers for intervention.[2]

- Support authorities to maintain public accountability.

- Reassure the general public and external stakeholders (those not involved in the programme) that peer review is not 'soft' or less rigorous than CAA/CPA.

- Establish common frameworks for the LGA approaches and provide models for councils and regions to use.

- Develop a narrative around the relationship between self improvement, regulation and inspection.

- Communicate the approach more widely across government to instil confidence.

- Invest in better knowledge dissemination.

- Communicate how the quality of peer challenge teams will be sustained as the volume increases.

Members of the public

Outlined below are the results from the first round of polling of 1,000 British residents carried out between 31 August and 2 September 2012. The purpose of the polling is to investigate the impact of sector-led improvement on the public. A further poll will be carried out in early 2013, and again in the autumn of 2013, to track public opinion over time.

At the simplest level, it can be argued that sector-led improvement is successful if public trust in local government remains the same or improves, despite the removal of much of the top down performance management and assessments.

- **How much do you trust your local council?** Sixty one per cent trusted their local council (10 per cent a great deal and 51 per cent a fair amount). This is a similar

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[2] It should be noted though that rather than identifying 'triggers' for intervention, under sector-led improvement there is instead a system in place for managing risk. The fact that not all stakeholders seemed to appreciate this suggests the need to make the sector's approach for managing the risk of underperformance more widely known.

level to that observed in the Citizenship Survey in 2009/10[3]. It is also worth noting that the Citizenship Survey recorded a steady increase in trust in the period 2001 – 2010.

The following questions explore local accountability and the extent to which the public feel they are able to influence their local council. Although it is challenging to ask residents directly about influence in a way that provides a meaningful response, research suggests strong links between feelings of influence and other factors that polling is more able to provide robust results for. [4] These factors are:

- **Overall, how well informed do you think your local council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?** 66 per cent of respondents felt well informed (17 per cent very well informed and 49 per cent fairly well). Other surveys have identified a slight downward trend in the extent to which residents feel informed since 2010.

- **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council runs things?** Just under three quarters of respondents are currently very (19 per cent) or fairly (53 per cent) satisfied with the way their local council runs things. This is a similar level to that found by other surveys, and this has remained fairly consistent over the last couple of years.

- **To what extent do you think your local council acts on the concerns of local residents?** Sixty two per cent of respondents stated that their council does this a fair amount (54 per cent) or a great deal (eight per cent).

It is important to note that many different factors impact resident's feelings and opinions of local government, and it will not be possible to attribute any improvement or decline directly to sector-led improvement. However, it is important to track resident's feelings about councils over the evaluation period, identify whether any existing trends are continuing, and consider the impact that sector-led improvement might have had on this, in the context of the other evaluation findings.

Survey of heads of policy and performance

The survey was sent via email to heads of policy or performance in 394 councils and fire and rescue authorities across England, and was in the field over the course of May and June 2012. A total of 137 responses were received – a response rate of 35 per cent.

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[3] Note though that the Citizenship Survey was a face to face survey as compared to the polling which was conducted by telephone.
http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurvey200910action
[4] Ipsos MORI, February 2012, Are You Being Served? Technical review of perception measures
http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f669da6b-083d-46cb-8311-f89187ea5a94&groupId=10171

Key findings

Authorities are currently undertaking a number of activities to strengthen local accountability, but there is scope to increase the level and variety of activities undertaken. 70 per cent of respondents acknowledged that their authorities will need to improve in order to reach the level of accountability that they aspire to.

The recent economic climate is helping many authorities focus and prioritise work on accountability and improvement, but the impact it is having on the financial and staff resources available to undertake this work is proving challenging for some.

More needs to be done to publicise the LGA's approach to sector-led improvement (eight per cent of respondents had heard nothing about this). However, even those who weren't aware of the approach had some awareness of specific offers such as peer challenge. The majority of those who were aware of the approach supported it (75 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the approach is the right one in the current context, 16 per cent were neutral and only six per cent disagreed).

The survey also asked about awareness of the specific offers from the LGA and these results are highlighted in the results section for each individual offer (see Annex B).

Chief Executives and Leaders

Telephone interviews were conducted with 50 chief executives and 50 leaders at an early stage in the sector-led improvement process, during August 2011. Respondents were asked about their awareness of *Taking the Lead* both as an **approach** to sector-led improvement and also in relation to the LGA's **offer** of support to the sector.

Awareness was fairly high: 90 per cent of chief executives and 80 per cent of leaders had heard at least something about the approach, whilst 88 per cent of chief executives and 76 per cent of leaders had heard at least something about the offer of support.

FURTHER SURVEY WORK IS BEING UNDERTAKEN WITH CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND LEADERS AS PART OF THE EVALUATION, AND THE RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT.

ANNEX B: EVALUATING THE OFFER OF SUPPORT TO THE SECTOR

Local accountability - YouChoose

YouChoose is an online budget simulator that encourages members of the public to consider where council budget reductions should fall, where efficiencies might be made, and where income might be generated. It is offered at no cost to councils in England and Wales through a partnership between the LGA and the London Borough of Redbridge.

- There have been 169 expressions of interest in the tool in the period between when the partnership between the LGA and Redbridge was established in summer 2010 and August 2012.

- Over the same time period, 131 councils have been set up to use the tool.

The survey of heads of policy and performance suggests that there is some way to go before councils are using tools such as YouChoose to strengthen local accountability on a regular basis; whilst 27 per cent had used a budget simulation tool in the previous 12 months, 50 per cent had no current plans to do so. Therefore, it seems a key challenge for YouChoose will be to communicate to authorities the benefits and reasons to use the tool.

Challenge from one's peers

The LGA has offered every council one corporate peer challenge, at no cost, during the three years from summer 2011.

There is a high level of awareness in the sector of the free peer challenge. In the online survey of heads of policy and performance, 84 per cent of respondents were aware of this – the highest level of awareness of all the LGA offers. Further, peer challenge was the aspect of the LGA's offer most commonly mentioned by stakeholders in the perceptions audit – peer challenge is generally very well regarded amongst this group.

Cardiff Business School has been commissioned to undertake the evaluation of peer challenge. The overall message from the Cardiff evaluation to date is 'so far, so good'. Councils have been very happy with their experience of the peer challenge process and are keen to see it spread widely across the sector. Key findings included:

- **Reasons for participating:** There are many reasons why councils request a corporate peer challenge. Most challenges have been forward looking (for example to feed into corporate planning exercises or ensure the council is equipped to meet future challenges) whilst other councils have been looking for external confirmation that they are improving.

- **Preparation:** The set-up meeting and other discussions that take place prior to the visit were seen as being crucial in getting the focus, scope and timing of the challenge right. Councils praised the flexibility and responsiveness shown by the LGA and its ability to put together teams with the right mix of skills and experience.

- **Core components:** There was broad support for the inclusion of the 'core components' of the corporate challenge process (setting priorities, financial resilience, effective leadership and governance and organisational capacity). Some interviewees thought there was a need for more examination of councils' financial planning processes.

- **Flexibility:** Councils value the flexible and tailored nature of the bespoke element of the process, and they praised the high quality of the peers, which is seen as key to the success of this. Some councils admitted however that they found it difficult to resist the impulse to 'put on a good show' for challenge teams.

- **Feedback:** Feedback at the end of visits was felt to be challenging but balanced and fair. Informal feedback from peers throughout the visit was also seen as especially valuable. Several authorities had published reports, though most had not sought proactively to disseminate them to their partners or the public.

- **Follow up:** Councils valued the opportunity for ongoing dialogue and engagement with peers but experiences were mixed – whilst some had had valuable follow up contact, others were unsure how to use their option of a follow up visit. Several said there needed to be a clearer process for connecting corporate peer challenge to other forms of LGA support.

In order to maintain and improve the effectiveness of peer challenge, the evaluation team made eight recommendations based on their findings. Briefly, these are:

- clarify the purpose of corporate peer challenges

- promote the benefits in order to increase the level of take up

- support councils to resist 'stage managing' visits and to be open, honest and willing to learn from the process

- maintain the quality of peers as demand for corporate peer challenge grows

- adopt a consistent approach to preparations for a challenge

- strengthen the analysis of councils' financial planning and viability

- encourage the effective communication of results within the council, to partners and to the public where appropriate

- be realistic about the volume of reviews that can be provided within existing budgets without compromising on quality, and set expectations accordingly.

The peer challenge team has already taken steps to address many of the recommendations in the report, and this will be outlined further in the full baseline report, along with a fuller explanation of the recommendations themselves.

Learning from good practice and the role of regional structures and networks

Sharing and drawing on information and best practice from other authorities and partners is a key way that councils are understanding performance in their councils and driving

improvement; in the online survey of heads of policy and performance, 91 per cent stated that they were doing this.

Whilst not all were aware that they could be using Knowledge Hub to help with this (82 per cent were aware of Knowledge Hub), this level of awareness is relatively high and places the tool as the second best known aspect of the LGA's offer on sector-led improvement.

Number of users

The Knowledge Hub had 126,150 registered users at 29 June 2012.[5] The LGA business plan[6] states that over the course of 2012/13, the aim is to achieve a 25 per cent increase in the use of Knowledge Hub. This refers both to the number of users and the number of visits the site receives. Later stages of this evaluation will monitor the extent to which the aspiration for a 25 per cent increase in usage has been achieved.

Activity and usage

For the period 1 April - 29 June 2012:

- a total of 58,111 different people visited Knowledge Hub

- around a third of these people had never visited the site before, whilst the remainder were returning visitors

- in total the site received 142,621 visits, meaning that on average each visitor visited two to three times over the three month period

Knowledge Hub offers a collaborative working environment, which includes the opportunity to set up groups. Groups enable members to discuss issues and ideas in forums, share documents and other files, connect with other members, share thoughts through writing blogs and post up relevant events. At 29 June 2012, there were 1,443 active groups in Knowledge Hub.

Transparent and comparable performance information – LG Inform

LG Inform is the LGA's free online data service. The prototype version of the tool was launched in July 2011 and updated in November 2011. A further updated version is currently in development and will be made available in early 2013.

Awareness of LG Inform across the sector is relatively high – in the online survey of heads of policy and performance, just over three quarters (77 per cent) had heard of the tool.

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[5] Please note that not all of these users will be active or activated; this information is not currently available, however it will be included in later stages of the evaluation.
[6] http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=e753abeb-678b-492c-89f7-08b40b8ea7a8&groupId=10171

Activity and usage statistics

- As at June 2012, LG Inform had 1,534 registered users. This has increased steadily since October 2011 (when this information began to be captured systematically), when the user base was 675. This is an increase of 127 per cent over this period.

- All county councils, all metropolitan districts and all but one London borough have at least one registered user. Currently, shire districts are the key group with a lower than anticipated take up of LG Inform.

- As at June 2012, 59 per cent of authorities had at least one user logging in within the 60 day period prior to the end of the month.[7]

- The number of published metrics available to users has increased by 39 per cent in recent months, from 571 in February to 792 in June.

Analysis of user feedback

Overall, the largest single category of feedback received as at June 2012 concerned the data held within LG Inform. Where data accuracy was challenged the LGA team has been able to prove data in the system is accurate as per national returns.

Forty one per cent of feedback between launch and June 2012 was associated with site performance and usability issues such as performance levels, issues with logging in and the provision of training materials and help.

These issues were largely raised within the first 4 months following the initial launch and were addressed between July and November 2011 with a number of improvements. These improvements meant the negative feedback largely disappeared by November 2011. However, it is recognised that system performance at some councils is still a concern. The new version of LG Inform will continue to address performance issues.

Investing in leadership

Effective political leadership is key to sustained improvement. In order to provide development support for political leaders the LGA is making available one subsidised place on the Leadership Academy for every council over the three year period from 2011/12.

The main academy consists of three modules covering issues such as personal, political, organisational and community leadership, while a number of two-day focused courses are also held on specific issues such as neighbourhood planning and localism, and leading in a crisis.

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[7] This is being distorted downwards slightly by the lower than average usage by district authorities. The level of activity for counties, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts and London boroughs is noticeably higher than average. In particular, at June 2012, 89 per cent of metropolitan districts and 78 per cent of counties had a user log in within the previous 60 days.

Take up of the Leadership Academy

In 2011/12, 104 councillors attended the main programme, with a further 21 having attended so far in 2012/13. A further 412 attended focused programmes in 2011/12, and 51 to date in 2012/13.

The online survey of heads of policy and performance suggests a relatively low level of awareness of the subsidised place amongst this group (28 per cent had heard about this). Whilst other groups, such as member support officers, are likely to be more aware of the Leadership Academy, increasing awareness amongst those that are responsible for driving performance and improvement might help increase take up levels further.

Views of attendees of the 2011/12 programmes

The views of those who attended the Leadership Academy in 2011/12 were captured through feedback forms. A full analysis of the views expressed in these forms is contained in the baseline report, and the key findings are outlined below. This will be repeated for those who attended in 2012/13, to be included in the final evaluation report.

The Academy is well regarded by attendees; on a scale where 1='poor', 2='fair', 3='good' and 4='excellent', attendees gave the following ratings:[8]

- Overall satisfaction with the event: 3.5 for the main programme and 3.4 for the focused programmes[9]

- How well the event met expectations: 3.4 for the main programme and 3.3 for the focused programmes.

- Knowledge and expertise of the external tutors: 3.7 for the main programme and 3.5 for the focused programmes.

- The extent to which the event provided useful learning tools: 3.4 for the main programme and 3.3 for the focused programmes.

- Agenda and content of the event: 3.2 for the main programme and 3.3 for the focused programmes.

The feedback forms also asked attendees the extent to which they agreed with three statements. Responses to these are outlined in Table 1. Again, responses are very positive, with almost all respondents stating that they would recommend LGA services to other councils. Slightly lower ratings can be seen for value for money, however respondents who did not indicate that the academy offered value for money generally answered 'don't know' rather than disagreeing.

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[8] Overall, depending on the question, figures are based on between 252 and 277 ratings by attendees on the main programme (because the programme consists of three modules, a single attendee can provide up to three ratings), and between 221 and 248 attendees responded for the focused programmes.
[9] Focused programmes are on specific topics such as neighbourhood planning and localism and leading in a crisis.

Table 1. Analysis of feedback forms	Main programme	Focused programmes
The Leadership Academy module has provided me with a basis for further improvement (% agree)	**100%**	**100%**
Would you recommend LGA services to other councils (% yes)	**100%**	**99%**
Do you think the event was value for money? (% agree)	**79%**	**86%**

Views of those authorities that have not made use of the Leadership Academy

A survey of member services officers in all authorities in England and Wales was conducted in January - February 2011. It was sent to all 375 local authorities in England and Wales, and at the close a total of 148 (39 per cent) had responded.

Fifteen per cent (22 respondents) had councillors that had attended prior to 2009/10 but not since, and a similar proportion (16 per cent – 23 respondents) had never had anyone attend. For both of these groups, the most common reason given for this was budget constraints: 10 of the 22 respondents whose councillors had attended prior to 2009/10 but not since gave this reason as did 12 of the 23 respondents whose council had never sent anyone on the programme.

Those respondents who <u>had</u> sent councillors to the Leadership Academy in 2009/10 and/or 2010/11 were asked how likely their authority would be to send other councillors on the programme in the future.

Slightly less than three quarters of respondents (71 per cent) indicated that their authority would be either very or fairly likely to send councillors on the leadership academy programme in the future. However, one in five (20 per cent) indicated that this would be either not very or not at all likely.

A small number of respondents wrote-in additional details explaining their answer; the most common theme emerging was that any future decisions would be dependent on councils' financial position and in light of any budget cuts.

It is worth noting that this survey was conducted before the offer of one subsidised place for each authority was introduced. The follow up survey will offer a chance to see the impact that this has had on authority's intentions to send their councillors on the programme.

Productivity Programme

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The report updates the Board on the progress being made in the Productivity Programme in the capital assets and economic growth programme and the recently published shared services report.

Recommendations

1. To note the work being undertaken as part of the capital assets and economic growth programme, approve the identified applications and agree a bid for further LGA funds so that the other applications can be progressed.

2. Note the recent launch of the shared services report.

3. Note the oral update on Procurement.

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

Productivity Programme Update

Background

1. The Board has approved the Productivity Programme to develop and operate a range of programmes to improve productivity and efficiency in councils. This report updates the Board on the progress being made in the capital assets and economic growth programme and on the recently published shared services report and toolkit. The report also highlights some recent work to support councils in countering fraud.

Capital Assets and Economic Growth Programme

2. The LGA launched the Capital Assets and Economic Growth Programme with its prospectus "*Using local authority capital and assets to promote economic growth*" in May 2012[1].

3. The programme is building on the first two waves of the capital & asset pathfinder programme in that it will assist councils to deliver savings through the rationalisation of capital assets. It will also promote local economic growth by helping to release land and buildings and taking advantage of current funding opportunities. As part of the programme councils are offered up to £25,000 (matched by their own funds) to assist in scoping a programme of strategic asset management in order to promote local economic growth. The programme will monitor and assist the participating council to realise the objectives as set out in their assets and growth strategy.

4. The programme requested applications from "cities" (as defined by the DCLG) together with the alumni of wave one and two pathfinder programmes. Not unexpectedly the programme has attracted significant interest from a wide range of cities. We have received numerous applications and shortlisted these down to the 12 which most closely match the criteria set down in the prospectus.

5. The following councils have applied and been short listed so far to be part of the programme (those marked with an asterisk have had – subject to this Board's approval - confirmation of funding:

    5.1. Barking and Dagenham*

    5.2. Eastbourne*

    5.3. Knowsley*

    5.4. Milton Keynes

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[1] http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10171/3510701/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

5.5.   Northumberland (Wave 2 authority)

5.6.   Plymouth*

5.7.   Somerset (Wave 2 authority)

5.8.   Stoke-on-Trent City Council*

5.9.   Surrey Heath (Wave 2 authority with Surrey CC)

5.10. Swindon (Wave 1 authority)

5.11. West London Alliance (Wave 2 applicant)

5.12. Worcestershire (Wave 1 authority)

6.   All asterisked bids are of a good quality and likely to result in some local economic growth; they can be funded from within the budget approved for this activity.

7.   The Board is asked to approve the asterisked bids and support a bid for further LGA funds, as part of the LGA's mid-year financial review, so that the additional bids can be supported.

Launch of the LGA's *'Services Shared: Costs Spared?'* report

8.   The LGA has long recognised the importance of shared services as one of a number of ways for councils to reduce costs and improve services. The majority of councils are already sharing services[2] and, while the savings have been significant across the lifetime of the projects, they are nothing like large enough to make up for the sizable cuts to local government funding which are being made. The amount of money councils receive from Government has fallen by £3.5 billion in real terms since 2010/11, a figure which eclipses many times over the savings that can be made annually from sharing services.

9.   Our recent '*Services Shared: Costs Spared?'* report[3], provides a detailed analysis of five shared service arrangements[4]. It provides a detailed insight into the scale of savings that have been achieved through sharing back office functions like IT and legal, and teaming up to deliver frontline services like waste disposal and road maintenance. This research contrasts with the recent publication of the Commons Public Accounts Committee[5] report into Whitehall shared services which showed that such arrangements had cost £1.4 billion to set up - £500 million more than expected – and in some cases had actually cost more than they had saved.

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[2] See the LGA's Shared Services Map - http://www.local.gov.uk/better-for-less-po-map
[3] Services Shared: Costs Spared? http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10171/3675051/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

[4] The five shared service projects examined in the report are: Hoople Ltd in Herefordshire; Local Government Shared Services in Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire; Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority; Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire; and Procurement Lincolnshire.

[5] http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/shared-services-report/

10. The key findings of the report include:

    10.1. Clear financial benefits have been achieved with the five shared services saving £30 million between them across the lifetime of the sharing arrangements through reducing staff (removing duplication and management posts), integrating IT, reducing accommodation, and improving procurement.

    10.2. The set up and integration costs for merging services are modest with less than a two year payback period for all the shared services analysed.

    10.3. The shared services have succeeded in providing the same or better levels of performance at less cost.

    10.4. These initial benefits are typically delivered rapidly with strong top-down leadership and rapid implementation helps build momentum for change.

    10.5. As shared services mature and evolve they are able to benefit from wider business transformation such as better use of IT and assets, improved processes and cultural change programmes.

    10.6. Baseline financial and performance information is essential to make the case for change and track the benefits of shared services in terms of efficiencies and service improvements.

    10.7. Good performance against organisations' key performance indicators are complemented by good staff indicators such as high staff morale, low staff sickness and low turnover rates.

    10.8. Expanding established shared services to provide services for other public sector partners in a locality is a useful way to generate income and ensure efficiencies through greater economies of scale.

11. Alongside the report, a new tool which helps councils to understand and track the benefits of sharing front and back office services has also been launched.

12. The LGA plans to share this report with central government departments to encourage the sharing of management teams and services across the public sector to achieve savings.

Waste

13. Severn Trent Water has agreed to 'host' this trial, which will be the largest of its kind anywhere in the world. One thousand macerators (Food Waste Disposers) will be installed in new or refurbished homes. The intention is to monitor the savings from removing a waste stream from collection and disposal and the impact, if any, on the sewers. Full results from the programme will not be available until autumn 2013.

Procurement

14. Members will recall that Andrew Smith, Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council, has led on the LGA's behalf an investigation into the potential opportunities for councils

to club together to purchase goods and services in some of the big spend categories . Deloitte have been appointed and at the time of writing a draft report is expected in September; an oral update will be provided by officers at the meeting.

Counter Fraud

15. Issues relating to fraud were originally reported to the Improvement Board during 2010/11. From April this moved to the Finance Task Group, though some members of the Improvement Board have remained active in supporting LGA counter fraud activity.

16. The Productivity Team has developed a support offer to work with two groups of authorities to support them in developing shared solutions to counter housing tenancy fraud. This is estimated to cost the public purse £900 million per annum. The support offer will initially focus on housing tenancy fraud, but will offer the potential for pooling resources to build resilience and expertise across all counter fraud activity. The budget for this pilot will be £75,000 and we expect this project to lead to savings to the public purse.

Financial Implications

17. The business plan for 2012/13 includes resources to develop the productivity programme to support councils improve productivity.

18. However, this is not sufficient to support all of the quality bids received as part of the Capital Assets and Economic Growth Programme. Further resources are being requested as part of the mid-year finance review. If resources are not available at this time some bids will have to be deferred or rejected.

Leadership & Localism: Update on recruitment to NGDP, Leeds Castle and Next Generation programmes

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

Recruitment to the 2012 (Cohort 14) intake to the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) is now being completed with a significant increase in both the number of trainees being taken on and the number of councils engaged.

Participation in Cohort 9 of the Leeds Castle programme is being finalised - the provisional list is weighted slightly more to politicians than to officers compared to the previous year.

All party groups continue to show interest in the Next Generation programme.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the composition of the 2012 programmes.

Action

Officers to take forward in line with Members' direction.

Contact officer:	Pascoe Sawyers
Position:	Principal Adviser
Phone no:	0207 664 3053
E-mail:	Pascoe.sawyers@local.gov.uk

Item 6

Leadership & Localism: Update on recruitment to NGDP, Leeds Castle and Next Generation programmes

Background

1. The Leadership and Localism team run a series of leadership development programmes with an annual intake.

2. The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) has an annual intake which varies according to the number of places councils can offer. Trainees are employed by participating councils for a period of 2yrs and undertake a series of projects and placements to help develop their leadership and management skills. They also undertake a development programme leading to an ILM Certificate (Level 7) in Strategic Leadership

3. Leeds Castle is a programme aimed at Council Leaders and Chief Executives with the potential to develop both as leaders of their communities and as leaders of the wider local government sector.

4. Next Generation is run on a party group basis with separate cohorts and providers for each party group. The objective is to develop new and young councillors with the potential to become political leaders in the future.

The issue

5. Although recruitment processes vary the take-up of all programmes is monitored to ensure that:

    5.1   sufficient numbers are recruited to make the programme viable;
    5.2   the right mix and level of participant is achieved; and
    5.3   we are engaging with a wide range of councils across all regions.

National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

6. In January 2012 we reported on the significant changes to the NGDP in both the recruitment and assessment process and the development programme the trainees undertake. We also reported in March that we were actively promoting the scheme to councils to increase the number of councils engaged in the scheme, particularly outside the London region. In 2011 the London Boroughs accounted for over half of all the councils participating (14 out of 25 councils).

7. For the 2012 intake (Cohort 14) three targets were set:

7.1   to recruit 70 trainees (compared to 47 in 2011);

7.2   to increase the number of councils participating with at least one in each region; and

7.3   to increase involvement outside the London region.

8.   This year's intake (Cohort 14) has shown a significant increase over the previous year both in the number of councils participating and in the number of places being offered. The target of 70 trainees has been exceeded with 77 trainees currently confirmed across 42 councils (compared to 47 across 25 councils in 2011). There is at least one council in each region and London Boroughs now form 33% of all organizations participating. Table A below compares the confirmed numbers for 2012 with those of the previous two cohorts.

Table A: NGDP Confirmed Placements 2010-2012

Cohort	12		13		14	
Year of Intake	2010		2011		2012	
	Trainees	*Councils*	Trainees	*Councils*	Trainees	*Councils*
Total	82	*44*	47	*25*	77	*42*
East Midlands	5	*3*	0	*0*	5	*2*
East of England	6	*3*	2	*1*	11	*8*
London	38	*18*	30	*14*	34	*14*
North East	2	*2*	2	*1*	1	*1*
North West	9	*4*	2	*2*	1	*1*
South East	7	*4*	6	*3*	12	*1*
South West	4	*3*	2	*2*	4	*3*
West Midlands	3	*2*	0	*0*	1	*1*
Yorks & Humber	8	*5*	3	*2*	6	*3*
National Bodies	0	*0*	0	*0*	2	*1**

* The LGA

9.   In addition two further councils (one in London and one in the North West) have expressed interest in taking a trainee each. These have not been included in the figures above.

10.   A further development has been four councils (including a Welsh council) expressing interest in sending locally recruited graduates on the development programme. This could bring in up to seven additional trainees and give an option that could be promoted more actively in future years provided we can ensure that the recruitment criteria used are comparable to those we use.

11.   The current position then is that the NGDP has met all its recruitment targets for Cohort 14 and exceeded the target number of trainee placements. The final position is likely to match if not exceed the numbers for Cohort 12, the last one to be recruited under the old scheme.

Leeds Castle

12.   Participants for Leeds Castle are nominated by the political group offices, principal advisers and alumni. The agreed nominees are then invited to apply by letter and then have a telephone interview using the knowledge of the delivery team to assess suitability for the

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type and style of programme. The programme is then designed to meet the specific needs of the participant group.

13.   In their letter of application the nominees set out:

13.1   An explanation of what they hope to get out of the programme – personally and professionally – and how this would be applied to their wider organisation and the local government sector.
13.2   An illustration of their commitment to being an active part of the programme itself and of the alumni network.
13.3   Any other information that helps explain what they would like to gain from the programme and why this is right for them now.
13.4   Full commitment to all programme dates.

14.   The participant list for the 2012 programme (Cohort 9) is still being finalised. However, the provisional grouping is that there will again be 17 participants but the split will be 11 Councillors to 6 Chief Executives compared to a 8 / 9 split in 2011. There is also likely to be a higher proportion of women (7 women to 10 men compared to 3 / 14 in 2011). The Party Group balance of the councillors the regional spread of all participants for both years is set out in Table B below.

Table B: Leeds Castle Participants

i) Councillors By Party Group	2011 (Actual)	2012 (Provisional)	ii) All participants by Region	2011 (Actual)	2012 (Provisional)
Conservative	5	4	East Midlands	0	2
Green / Independent	1	2	East of England	6	5
Labour	2	3	London	1	3
Liberal Democrat	0	2	North East	0	0
			North West	2	0
			South East	5	2
			South West	1	2
			West Midlands	2	2
			Yorks. & Humber	0	1

15.   The North East is the only region not to have had a participant this year or last, however leaders from the region have participated in previous years. It should also be noted that there are significantly fewer councils in this region than in others making it a smaller pool of leaders to draw on.

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16. Within the requirements of the programme we are maintaining a good cross section of both party group affiliation amongst the councillor participants and a good spread across the regions.

Next Generation

17. For the 2012 Next Generation programme we have worked closely with the political offices to promote applications and also to raise the calibre and quality of the applications. The overall position to date is that though we have had a similar number of applications overall as last year (109 compared to 107 in 2011) this is likely to increase as applications are still open for the Liberal Democrat cohort. Table C below gives a breakdown of current nominations.

Table C: Next Generation Applications

i) by Region

	Lab	Cons	Lib Dem
East of England	5	5	0
East Midlands	4	6	1
London	6	4	5
North East	1	0	1
North West	11	5	2
South East	5	5	4
South West	1	5	4
West Midlands	2	7	1
Yorks. & Humber	6	1	1
Council Unknown*	6	1	2
Total	47	39	21

ii) by Type of Council

	Lab	Cons	Lib Dem
County	0	3	0
District	12	18	6
London Bor.	6	4	5
Metropolitan	14	2	3
Unitary	9	11	5
Council Unknown*	6	1	2
Total	47	39	21

Not all applicants named their council in their application form

18. The overall position hides variations within each of the party groups:

   18.1 Labour:- 47 applications compared to 53 in 2011. While there were fewer applications than last year this is due to imposing new requirements on applicants with the aim of increasing the calibre and experience of the applicants and reduce the number of multiple applications from a single authority.
   18.2 Conservative:- Shows a significant increase in applications: 39 compared to 19 last year.
   18.3 Liberal Democrat:- 21 compared to a total of 37 in 2011 but applications are still open so the final position could change.

19. All group cohorts will need to go through a selection process. The Labour and Conservative groups have each agreed on a maximum of 20 participants for their cohorts while the Liberal Democrats have set a maximum of 15.

20. Significant steps have been taken to increase engagement and participation in the programme. Nominees have been received from all regions and types of councils. The only obvious concern is that only two nominations in total have been received from the North East region (the next smallest being Yorkshire & Humber with eight), though as with

the Leeds Castle programme this may be because of the comparatively small pool of councillors.

Conclusion and next steps

21. All three programmes have made significant efforts to increase engagement and participation while at the same time seeking to protect the quality, mix and profile of the participants to ensure they are suitable for the programme.

Financial Implications

22. There are no financial implications for the current year that cannot be met from within the allocated budgets. There may be some implications for NGDP in 2013/14 when Cohort 14 commence their development programme because of the higher than planned number but again we would seek to accommodate these with the budget.

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	Improvement Board
Date:	Tuesday, 17 July 2012
Time:	11.05 am – 12.40 pm
Venue:	Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council / Representing
Chairman	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Deputy-Chairman	Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LB
Deputy-Chairman	Jeremy Webb	East Lindsey DC
Members	Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
	Michael White	Havering LB
	Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
	Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
	Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
	Judith Blake	Leeds City
	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Substitutes	Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
	Jonathan Owen	East Riding
	Peter Britcliffe	Hyndburn DC
Apologies	Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
	William Nunn	Breckland Council
Observers/Other attendees	Cllr Paul Bettison	LGA Conservative National Lead Peer
	Philip Sellwood	Energy Savings Trust
	Richard Priestman	Lombard
	John Harris	Children's Improvement Board
	Cllr Penny Shelton	Kingston upon Thames
LGA Officers	Michael Coughlin, Dennis Skinner, Pascoe Sawyers, Brian Reynolds, Juliet Whitworth, Kate Hills	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by

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   Board End of Year Review - 2011/12

Dennis Skinner (Head of Leadership and Productivity) introduced the report which set out the progress made in delivering the Improvement Board's contribution to the LGA's 2011/12 business plan priorities.

The Chairman commended the achievements of the Board over the past 12 months and thanked Members and officers for their support. In discussing the Board's performance, it was noted that certain priorities, such as sector-led improvement were continuous targets and therefore were amber rather than green.

<u>Decision</u>

*That the Board **noted** the report.*

1.b   Children's Improvement Board (CIB) – Update on sector-led improvement

John Harris (Associate Director of Brokerage and Commissioning - CIB) briefly introduced the report which provided an update on sector-led improvement in children's services being taken forward through the Children's Improvement Board (CIB). In doing so, he set the work of the CIB within the overarching framework for sector-led improvement, summarised the key learning to be taken from performance over the first quarter of 2012/13 and highlighted the key priorities in going forward. With reference to anticipated future spending reductions, John highlighted the importance of promoting the success of sector-led improvement to Government.

In the discussion that followed, Members made a number of comments and questions, which were responded to by John Harris, relating to issues including:

- With reference to the mix of national and regional activity, Members welcomed the positive impact of the CIB and highlighted a number of local examples of improvement.

- A detailed discussion arose about whether the children's sector was "risk averse" and whether this was an impediment to innovation and efficiency and how best to mitigate against this.

- With reference to the Munroe Review, changing expectations regarding quality of care and evolving inspection criteria, a discussion arose regarding the support available to local authorities to help them meet the challenges of the new inspection environment. This included a revised peer challenge offer that reflected the revised focus of inspections. Clear communication between the sector and the inspectorates regarding changes to criteria was highlighted as vital.

- A discussion arose regarding the different types of delivery mechanisms for Peer Challenge and the importance of a robust external critical friend element.

Decision

*That the Board **noted** the report and progress made.*

1.c   Future arrangements for Audit

Dennis Skinner (Head of Leadership and Productivity) briefly outlined the report, which summarised the key elements of the recently published draft Local Audit Bill and legislative timescale. Members were asked to share their views, particularly in relation to paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2 to help inform the LGA's response to the draft Bill.

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

- Members endorsed and echoed the concerns set out in paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2 relating to the future role of the National Audit Office (NAO) and the transfer of data matching powers.

- Whilst frustrations were expressed regarding the timescale for local authorities having the ability to appoint their own auditors, it was noted that LGA lobbying had helped secure savings of £250 million over five-years for local authorities.

- Members were concerned about the proposed role of the NAO in identifying improvements in local government since this could duplicate the sector's own arrangements and once started, there was the potential for "mission creep". Members emphasised the importance of promoting sector-led improvement throughout all levels of Government, including the Public Accounts Committee. The Chairman entreated Board Members to encourage councils within their region to write to the Government regarding this specific issue.

Decisions

That the Board:

i. **noted** *the report;*

ii. **asked** *that their comments inform the LGA's response to the draft Bill; and*

iii. **endorsed** *the views set out in paragraph 10.1 and 10.2.*

Action

Develop draft response in the light of existing policy, sector views and Members' comments and submit to lead members for approval.

Nick Easton

2.   Productivity Programme

Councillor Penny Shelton from Kingston upon Thames spoke about the Council's positive experience of being part of the Productivity Programme's Adult and Social Care Programme. As part of phase one, the Council undertook a diagnostic that helped challenge and refine its existing savings plans. She outlined the benefits of the programme, including the projected savings as well as its positive impact on the council's approach to other areas of work. Brian Reynolds (Productivity Programme) noted that an interim report to share learning from the Programme so far would be available in the autumn.

Councillor Cadbury outlined the report, which updated Members on the progress made in delivering the Productivity Programme. In particular, she drew attention to the category management pilot scheme, amendments to the local government procurement pledge, the Future Council and Tell us once programmes as well as progress made in campaigning for simpler future EU procurement rules.

Decisions

That the Board:

i. **noted** *the report and progress made;*

ii. **approved** *the changes to the Local Government Procurement Pledge; and*

iii. **approved** *the additional councils to go forward to the next stage of the Future Council programme.*

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

3   Leadership Programme

Pascoe Sawyers (Principal Adviser Leadership & Localism) briefly outlined the report which updated Members on progress made in developing and delivering the Leadership and Localism programme of work.

In the ensuing discussion, Members noted the progress made in connecting graduates from the National Graduate Development Programmes (NGDP) with elected members as well as steps taken to address the disparity between the number of applicants and the number of places on the programme.

Decision

*That the Board **noted** progress made in taking forward the programme.*

Action

Officers to continue to develop the programme in line with the progress made and taking into account Members' comments.	Pascoe Sawyers
That information be sent to Board members about the cost per head for the Leadership Programme's training courses.	Pascoe Sawyers

4.   Resident Satisfaction Questions: LGA Consultation

Councillor Tim Cheetham introduced the report which provided an update on the outcome of the recent consultation into developing a set of questions and guidance for the sector to use to collect comparable data on resident satisfaction. Members were asked to endorse publishing the final set of questions and guidance as well as to provide their view on whether or not to allow residents panel data to be uploaded to LG Inform.

In the ensuing discussion, Members expressed concerns about the comparability of residents panel data and therefore recommended that at present, it not be included on LG Inform. With reference to the value of including data from other public sector partners on LG Inform, it was also noted that the usefulness of the benchmarking data would depend on the number of councils that participate.

Decisions

That the Board:

(i)   **approved** *that the final set of questions and guidance on
         resident satisfaction be published.*

(ii)   **agreed** *not to upload residents panels data to LG Inform for
         comparison at this stage.*

Action

Officers to take forward this work in light of Members' comments.

5.   **Creative Councils**

The Chairman briefly outlined the report which updated Members on
progress with the Creative Councils innovation programme. Whilst six
councils had been selected for further financial support under Phase 2 of
the programme, the Chairman thanked all those councils that had taken
part and indicated that the learning from those councils that had not be
successful would also be built upon. Over the course of the next year,
the six successful Creative Councils would be sharing their leaning with
the Improvement Board as well as other relevant LGA Boards.

Decision

*That the Board **noted** the report.*

6.   **Outside Bodies**

The Chairman briefly outlined the report which set out the list of
bodies/LGA structures which the Improvement Board would appoint to for
the 2012/13 meeting cycle.

Decision

*That the Board **agreed** the list of bodies/LGA structures which the
Improvement Board would appoint to for the 2012/13 meeting cycle.*

7.   **Notes of the last meeting and actions arising**

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

8.   **Date of next meeting**

11.00am Monday, 17 September 2012

Action Monitor Schedule

Title:	Improvement Board
Date:	Tuesday, 17 July 2012
Venue:	Local Government House

Item	Action	Progress
1.c	**Future arrangements for Audit**	
	Develop draft response to the Draft Audit Bill in the light of existing policy, sector views and Members' comments and submit to lead members for approval.	The LGA's response to the draft Audit Bill was approved by the four Lead Members of the Board and submitted to DCLG on 7.09.12.
3	**Leadership Programme**	
	That information be sent to Board members about the cost per head for the Leadership Programme's training courses.	Circulated to Members on 29.09.12.

LGA Location Map
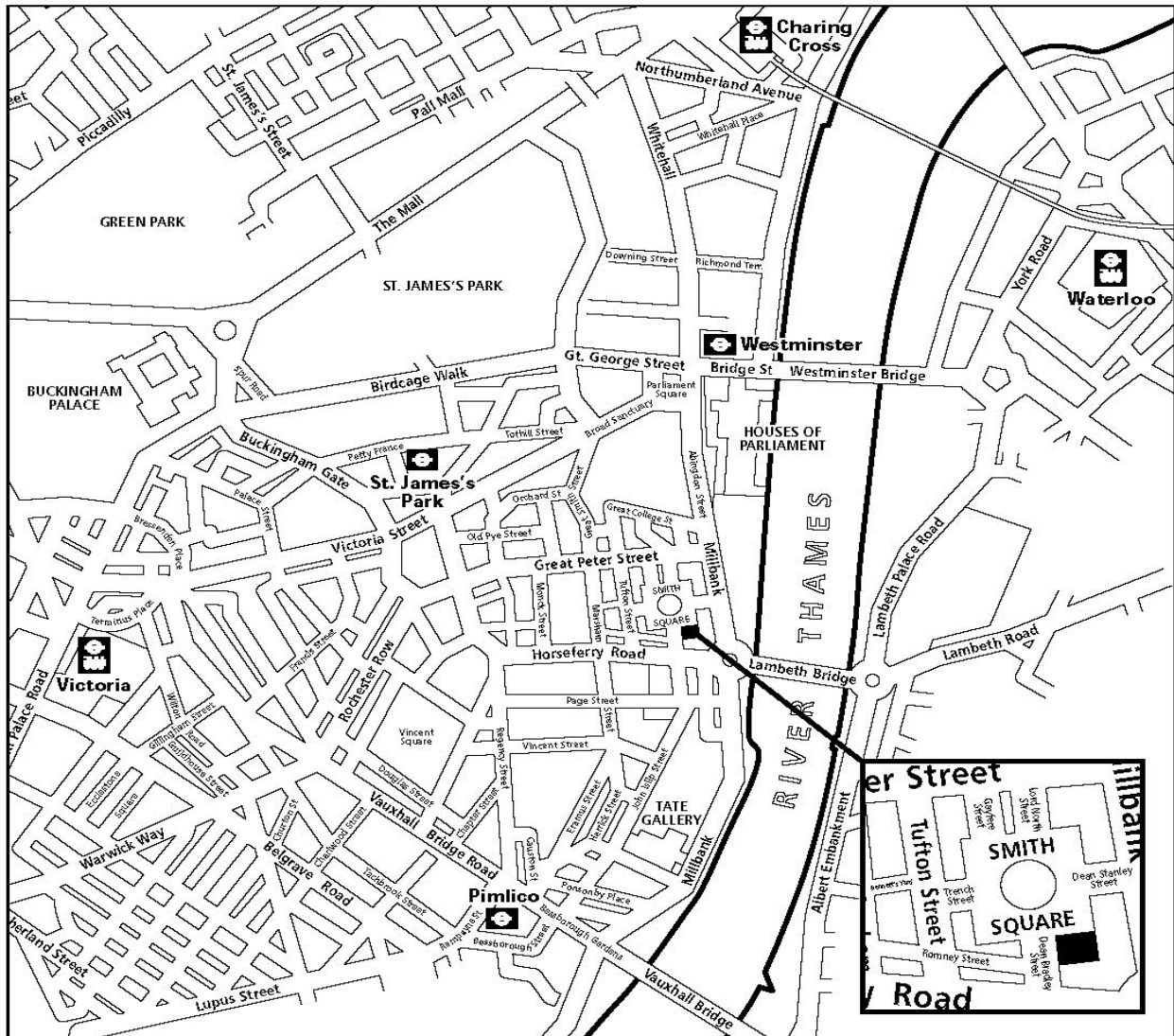
Local Government Association
Local Government House
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
Tel: 020 7664 3131
Fax: 020 7664 3030
Email: info@lga.gov.uk
Website: www.lga.gov.uk

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
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