

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Improvement and Innovation
Date: Tuesday 16 July 2013
Venue: Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council / Representing
Chairman	Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Deputy-Chair	Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LB
Deputy-Chair	Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
Members	Teresa O'Neill	Bexley LB
	Tony Jackson	East Herts Council
	Barry Wood	Cherwell DC
	Alan Melton	Fenland District Council
	Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
	Tim Cheetham	Barnsley MBC
	Helen Holland	Bristol City
	Kate Hollern	Blackburn with Darwen
	Rory Palmer	Leicester City
	Sir David Williams CBE	Richmond upon Thames
	Edward Lord OBE	City of London Corporation
	Clarence Barrett	Havering LB
Apologies	Jeremy Webb	East Lindsey DC
	Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
	Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Glen Miller	Bradford Metropolitan DC
	Chris Hayward	Three Rivers DC
	David Mackintosh	Northampton BC
Observers/Other attendees	Cllr Howard Sykes	LGA Liberal Democrat National Lead Peer
	Philip Sellwood	Energy Savings Trust
	Richard Priestman	Lombard
	Cllr Paul Lakin	Portfolio Holder for CYP, Rotherham MBC
	Martin Kimber	CEX, Rotherham MBC
	Catherine Brentnall	MD of Ready Unlimited
	Judith Armitt	CEX, Local Partnerships
LGA Officers	Michael Coughlin, Juliet Whitworth, Short, Brian Reynolds, Andy Bates	Gesche Schmid, Pascoe Sawyers, Mike

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	Welcome and Introductions	
	<p>The Chairman welcomed Members, observers and officers to the meeting.</p>	
	<p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	Rotherham Creative Councils	
	<p>Cllr Paul Lakin (portfolio holder for Children and Young People, Rotherham MBC) introduced the creative council project and explained some of the background behind it.</p>	
	<p>Martin Kimber (CEX, Rotherham MBC) took the board through four slides depicting the financial challenges and implications for Rotherham council over the next few years and the national funding outlook. He also explained the project's guiding principle of supporting business and jobs growth as well as improving the skills of their citizens and communities.</p>	
	<p>A short film was shown to members explaining the progress of 'Rotherham Ready' and the national project 'Ready Unlimited'. This included information on their main aims to empower educators to bring enterprise learning into the classroom and to encourage more young entrepreneurs and business start-ups.</p>	
	<p>Catherine Brentnall (MD, Rotherham Unlimited) took the board through the remaining slides; these demonstrated how the project was taking entrepreneurial ideas into the classroom by combining these skills with the curriculum subjects and getting business skills ingrained in children from a young age. Catherine also explained the development of 'Ready Hub's' which encouraged community involvement in creating an entrepreneurial system and gave examples of how the project had encouraged young people to start up their own businesses.</p>	
	<p>The speakers concluded by asking the board to use their contacts and resources to help try and shift the national educational policy in favour of entrepreneurial training for teachers and children.</p>	
	<p>Members of the Board were invited to ask questions, these included amongst others:</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to get local comprehensive schools involved across the country? Rotherham explained they were looking at using social enterprise and developing effective best practice models.	

- **What the financial stability of the project and its services were?**
The positive economic impact of the project was explained but no firm assurance of future stability could be given.
- **How to get students to understand the importance of a non-curriculum topic?**
It was suggested that enterprise was made part of the curriculum, for example business finance in maths and marketing skills in English
- **How the high business start-up success rate in Rotherham was achieved?**
It was explained that Rotherham provided free business units, free business support and advice and wrap around support for 16-30 year olds starting up businesses.

Decisions

The Board **agreed** to help promote the work of the project.

Actions

Liaise with officers about the involvement of the Economy and Transport Board and Children and Young Peoples Board with future work around the project.

Mike Short

Mike Short

Officers to arrange for this project to be considered when drafting the LGA's response to any appropriate DfE consultations on education e.g. the primary curriculum

3. Local Partnerships

Judith Armit (CEX, Local Partnerships) took the board through her PowerPoint presentation which explained the joint ownership of the company by the LGA and the Treasury. She explained the remit of Local Partnerships to provide practical delivery expertise on a range of areas from infrastructure to contracts, including for example Mersey gateway, rural broadband and PFI projects. This was all for the benefit of the public sector. Local Partnerships helped to save councils money. She explained they worked with the LGA in providing packages of help for individual councils and they were strongest when they worked in partnership.

Questions were then asked by Board members on topics including the employment structure of Local Partnerships and how the intellectual property owned by the company could be used in a more commercial manner.

Decisions

The Board **Noted** the Report

Action

Take forward in line with Members' recommendations.

Judith Armitt

4. Corporate Peer Challenges

Officers explained the peer challenge offer was being taken up by many councils and they were very busy. There was an analysis of the areas councils chose to focus on during their challenges with many councils choosing to stick to the core issues. These were understanding the local context and priorities, the financial plan, effective political and managerial leadership, effective governance and decision making activity, whether the organisational capacity and resources were focused in the correct places.

However there was also a move from the core issues to a more tailored approach where other areas including transformation, local growth and future strategy were looked into.

Questions were asked including whether the peer challenge needed to move from the core offer to incorporate other areas. Members felt the offer was still fine if they made sure there was some flexibility in the areas councils can choose to focus on. There was also some discussion on how to get more outside people including those who were pioneers in innovative practice to become part of the peer challenge team. It was explained that this was happening more and more and officers were looking to expand this way of working.

What councils were getting in terms of outcomes from the challenges was discussed, with many councils saying they achieved greater confidence in their work. There was a discussion on whether councils would pay to receive follow up support after the challenges, this was agreed as a good idea by members but there were issues of capacity mentioned.

Decisions

That the Board: **Noted** the progress made and ongoing work of the Peer Challenge programme.

Action

Officers to bring a further report to the Board in due course updating members on the progress of the peer challenge programme.

Mike Short / Andy
Bates

5. Update on Transparency

Cllr Tim Cheetham and Gesche Schmid (Programme manager-transparency) updated the board on the progress of the transparency work since the last board meeting. Cllr Cheetham explained there was widespread support on transparency across government including the secretary of state.

Discussions were held around the government announcements on open data information economy, the open data break through funding and data protection compliance and information sharing.

Decisions

That the Board:

Noted the progress made and ongoing work of the Transparency programme.

Action

Take forward in line with Members' recommendations.

Gesche Schmid

6. LG Inform: Update

Juliet Whitworth (Research and Information Manager) demonstrated the improved tool to the members, going through the information available and how you can shape it to meet individual requirements such as coming up with statistics relevant to your council when you log in, setting out the charts in your favoured format and editing your own council's page. She also explained that councils would have access to provisional data that the public would not have.

The soft launch to people who were already signed up to the system would be in July, it would be launched to everyone else in September and to the public in November.

Board members asked how it would be promoted. Juliet answered that it would be going in the bulletins, the magazines and to all of the chief executive and council networks. Concerns were raised about the availability of information to the media making it easier for them to write disparaging articles. It was explained that this information was already public but they were making it more easily accessible. Councils would also be able to put text next to the graphs to explain the results.

Decision:

Officers to take forward in line with members discussions.

Action:

The Board noted the report

Juliet Whitworth

7/8/9/10 For Information

Items 7,8,9 and 10 were all taken together.

Item 7 Leadership and Localism: An update was given on the leadership programmes working group and the Board were informed there was another meeting happening at the end of July, progress would be reported to the next Board meeting.

Item 8 Productivity Programme Update: The report was noted.

Item 9 Local Audit and Accountability Bill: The progress of the Bill would be reported to a future meeting.

Item 10 End of Year Review: Chair Cllr Peter Fleming thanked board members and officers for their hard work over the year. He emphasised the key importance of the Improvement and Innovation Board and the valuable role it can play in the future. Other members noted that the board had achieved highly and driven huge amounts of work helping to make councils throughout the country more innovative and open to implement change.

Decision

The Board Noted the Reports.

Action

Take forward in line with members recommendations

LGA Officers

11. Note of the last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

12. AOB

Cllr Edward Lord OBE said that this would be his last Board meeting. Cllr Peter Fleming and members thanked him for his huge contribution to the board.

13. Date of next meeting

Thursday 19 September 2013