

Innovation Programme update

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report updates the Board on progress made in implementing the Innovation Programme, following its agreement on 19 March 2013, and on three specific projects within it:

1. Creative Councils
2. LGA Conference Innovation Zone
3. Local Councils' Innovation Framework, which was presented to the Board on 15th January 2013

Based upon these updates the Board is asked to offer guidance on where next for innovation support for the sector. A revised programme of work will then be brought to a future meeting.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the progress of the Innovation Programme, (including the Local Councils' Innovation Framework, LGA Conference Innovation Zone and Creative Councils) and offer guidance about ongoing assistance with innovation in the sector.

Action

Officers to reflect Members' suggestions in the design and delivery of future support to councils, communications and lobbying activity derived from the Innovation Programme and associated projects and develop a revised programme of work for approval at a future meeting.

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INNOVATION PROGRAMME

Background

1. Alongside the on-going implementation of the Creative Councils programme with NESTA a number of wider complementary innovation activities were also being implemented by the LGA. All such activity to support the sector with innovation was captured within the Innovation Programme Plan agreed by the Improvement and Innovation Board on 19 March 2013.
2. The plan is subdivided into three work streams underpinned by a number of projects:
 - 2.1 Programme development
 - 2.2 Innovation and creativity support to councils
 - 2.3 Policy development

Progress in implementation

3. Good progress has been achieved particularly in relation to Creative Councils, the LGA Conference Innovation Zone and the Local Councils Innovation Framework, further details of all of these are set out below.

Creative Councils

4. The latest activity was Creative Councils' involvement in the Innovation Zone at LGA Conference where Wigan, Derbyshire, Monmouthshire, Rotherham, Cornwall and Stoke sent representatives to take part in various dissemination events.
5. Creative Councils will draw to a close at the end of November 2013 and there are four major planned activities:
 - 5.1 An overarching account of the insights from the programme will be drafted by Charlie Leadbeater and Sophia Parker. This will be published in hard copy and will draw out themes and lessons in an engaging way.
 - 5.2 A series of outputs which will be specific to each council and developed by each council. These are likely to include case studies or story boards of the innovations they developed, which could be printed or provided as pdf documents. In addition each council is to produce a number of artifacts such as videos, graphics, slide decks etc to ensure they have valuable products to use in the dissemination of their work and provide something that NESTA and the LGA can use more broadly. As part of the dissemination and scaling work, the Innovation Unit will be sourcing networks and organisations that would be prepared to partner with each of the councils and support them in spreading their excellent work.

- 5.3 NESTA will develop an account of what the overall programme achieved. They aim to capture an honest view on what was actually done. They will be collating all of the important artifacts – press cuttings, blogs, photos, workshop agendas, minutes of meetings, etc – into an easily searchable folder.
- 5.4 Development of learning packages and capturing the content from the programme that can be incorporated into NESTA's skills offer. These will include personal stories (videos), frameworks and tools, case studies, reading lists, contact details.
6. All the above will be used at the Creative Councils dissemination event planned for November to which a number of other councils regarded to be leaders in innovation will be invited to contribute views on the outcomes and learning from Creative Councils. Further dissemination opportunities are being pursued and organised for each Creative Council to partake in. Currently Derbyshire and Rotherham are presenting at the National Children and Adults Services Conference 16-18 October. Derbyshire are also taking part in #our day (part of We Love Local Government) during local democracy week 14 -20 October and Monmouthshire are to present at the i-Network Annual Conference on 27 November.

LGA Conference Innovation Zone

7. Overall the Innovation Zone was a great success and showcased a variety of councils who are taking part in numerous innovation projects. Over the three days no fewer than six social innovation projects, six Future Councils, six Creative Councils, six Digital Councillors, six technology led Council projects and six award winning Innovation Councils used the space in each of their own inevitably creative ways to stimulate interested delegates. See **Appendix A** for details.

Local Councils Innovation Framework

8. At the meeting on 15th January the Board were updated on the development of a 'Local Councils' Innovation Framework' as part of the Accelerating Innovation in Local Government Research Project and the work taking place in two councils (Surrey CC and Sandwell MBC) who had either adapted the framework or used similar approaches. Presentations were made by Joan Munro on the 'Local Councils' Innovation Framework' and Cllr Denise Le Gall, Cabinet Member, Surrey County Council on their 'Achieving systematic innovation framework'.
9. Arising from discussions was a request from members that the Local Councils Innovation Framework be strengthened by interviewing a number of council members from across the country for their input into how they best encourage innovation activity within their council.
10. A series of twelve such interviews with an agreed set of challenging questions was arranged. The research found that in councils achieving more innovations the Leaders:
 - 10.1 Agree clear, long-term ambitions and priorities for innovation, that reflect residents' concerns;

- 10.2 Earmark resources to achieve these ambitions;
 - 10.3 Create the organisational climate for innovation (including allowing calculated risk taking and tolerating intelligent failures);
 - 10.4 Build a bold, united leadership approach to innovation;
 - 10.5 Convincingly communicate the reasons for innovations (particularly to residents and employees);
 - 10.6 Involve key stakeholders in developing innovations (such as residents, employees, businesses and partners); and
 - 10.7 Persist, despite many barriers, until innovations are achieved.
11. Many of the innovations being achieved were ideas adapted from elsewhere, with the most innovative councils proactively looking for fresh ideas, externally and internally.
 12. There appeared to be scope for Council Leaders to encourage more innovations. For example, many Council Leaders were doing some of the things that foster innovation, but more could have taken a comprehensive strategic approach to innovation; more could have identified their key priority areas for innovation and focused their efforts on innovation in the biggest, high spending service areas.
 13. The conclusions from the new research support and complement the findings from previous research the project had undertaken on innovation, with chief executives and with frontline employees.
 14. The research findings were presented at the LGA Conference Innovation Zone chaired by Cllr Peter Fleming as Chair of the Improvement and Innovation Board. Three members who had been interviewed as part of the research discussed what they are doing to encourage more innovations in their councils. These were Cllr Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council, Cllr Michael White, Leader of Havering Council and Cllr James Alexander, Leader City of York Council.
 15. The session officially launched the 'Council Leaders' Key Action for Innovation', a checklist council leaders can use to review whether there is more they might do to encourage innovation to flourish in their councils. See **Appendix B** for details.

Conclusion

16. The Innovation Programme approved by the Board at its meeting in March has been largely successfully completed and the joint Creative Councils work with NESTA is drawing to a close. It is now timely to review the nature of the LGA's on-going work to help councils continue to innovate. Members' views are sought with a view to a proposed work programme being brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Appendix A – LGA Conference Innovation Zone activities

Council leaders' key actions for innovation: political accounts of encouraging innovation to flourish

- Martin Tett, Leader, Buckinghamshire County Council, Michael White, Leader, LB Havering and James Alexander, Leader, York City Council discussed the most effective ways for politicians to achieve more innovations in their councils
- Presented key findings from the research on politicians' views on innovation, giving participants a 'key actions' checklist
- Shared examples and ideas from the councils achieving or developing more innovations, more successfully

Digital Councillors – award-winning councillors discussed how they are using digital effectively and getting results.

- Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- David Harrington, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Finance, Stockton Borough Council
- Anthony McKeown, Deputy Leader, High Peak Borough Council
- Barry Kirby, Quedgeley Parish Council
- Simon Cooke, Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council Councillor
- Alison Hernandez, Torbay Council
- Jayne Cowan, Cardiff City Council

Future Councils

- Developing a vision of public service delivery for Suffolk in 2016 - Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Managing demand to avoid future costs on council services - Buckinghamshire County Council
- Loyalty reward scheme - Birmingham City Council
- A joint trading venture - Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- Streetwise – developing a social franchise - Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Co-operative council approach and ambitions - Plymouth City Council

Councils who have invested in or are exploring how new technologies can better support improved service delivery

- Bristol City Council – open data and community projects including “Hills are Evil” and “I love my city”
- Surrey County Council – innovation peer challenge, innovation hubs and trialing new technology (including watches for people with dementia)

- Cheshire West and Chester Council – recycling disposable nappies into plastic roof tiles

Award winners in innovation

- Suffolk County Council - getting mobile apps onto school curriculums
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council - creating innovation fit councils
- Stoke Creative Council - developing its goal to become an energy sufficient 'Great Working City'
- Derbyshire Creative Council – showcasing 'Uni-fi', a bespoke package of support aimed at developing aspiration amongst young people in care
- Wigan Creative Council – creating a new economic model for social care
- York City Council – a demonstration of the York App for tourists, exploring salary sacrifice for staff tools and GeniUS innovation fund

Appendix B - 'Council Leaders' Key Action for Innovation'

See separate PDF doc launched in Innovation Zone