

Future of the Leadership Centre for Local Government

Purpose

For decision.

Summary

At their last meeting on 16 May, the LGA Leadership Board considered a paper on the future relationship between the LGA and the Leadership Centre for Local Government. Members agreed the broad approach set out, in principle, and asked for further work to be done and for a follow up paper to be submitted to the next Leadership Board meeting. This paper sets out the outcome of further discussions with the Chairman of the Leadership Centre Board of Trustees.

Recommendation

The Leadership Board is asked to confirm its agreement to the approach set out.

Action

Officers to action in line with the Leadership Board's decision.

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Future of the Leadership Centre for Local Government

Background

1. In May 2012, the LGA Leadership Board considered a paper on the future relationship between the LGA and the Leadership Centre for Local Government. The Board agreed the broad approach, in principle, but asked for further work to be done and for a follow up paper to be submitted to the next Leadership Board meeting.
2. Since then further discussions have taken place, including a meeting between the Chairman, Chief Executive and Executive Director of the LGA with Lord Peter Smith, the Chairman of the Leadership Centre, at which Lord Smith confirmed his agreement with the proposals put forward by the LGA, in particular on those set out below.

Relationship with the LGA

3. On behalf of the Leadership Centre board, Lord Smith confirmed the Centre's desire for a close working relationship with the LGA, in order to ensure the alignment of its work with that of the LGA.

Work to be commissioned from the Leadership Centre

4. The approach agreed by the Leadership Board covered four areas –
 - 4.1. Issues on which the LGA find it difficult to establish a consensus view (e.g. Elected Mayors);
 - 4.2. Highly sensitive issues over the longer term (e.g. the future of adult social care);
 - 4.3. Working across the public sector with other bodies;
 - 4.4. Working for individual political parties.
5. One of the tensions that exists is whether working across the public sector should include non-local authority participants or whether it should be specifically tailored to support councillors and local authority senior managers to work across organisations.

Item 3

6. Officers have been tasked with working up proposals, with the intention of work commencing this autumn. This would enable the LGA to ensure that the proposed work programme fits with its key priorities and complements work it undertakes directly.

Place based leadership

7. Through initiatives such as Whole Place Community Budgets and the establishment of Combined Authorities as part of the City Deals initiative, new forms of governance are evolving, involving a range of local public sector organisations (e.g. CCGs, Health and Well-being Boards, LEPS, Police and Crime Panels). Such arrangements require new and different approaches to leadership by local government leaders, moving increasingly from direct leadership of their organisations to contributing to collaborative leadership of the place.
8. The LGA is well-placed to address the particular leadership development needs of councils under these arrangements, but is less well-placed to propose how this should happen across other public sector bodies or to help people achieve solutions (which will vary from place to place). This would run the risk that other public sector players could see this as local government dominating, rather than collaborating with them. However, as a registered charity at arms length from the LGA the Leadership Centre would be more likely to be seen as a neutral player, with which other public sector bodies would be more likely to engage.
9. If we are to demonstrate to the sector and to Government that our approaches are scalable, we would need to commission the Centre to start work on this. However we must ensure that funding of the resulting work is not solely the responsibility of the LGA/local government, but also secures commitment and resources across the public sector, to ensure that local government does not shoulder the financial burden of a commonly felt leadership development need.

Refreshing the trustee membership of the Leadership Centre

10. Because the Centre is a registered charity, the LGA does not have nominating rights to the board of trustees. However, as trustees complete their terms of office there is the opportunity to change the board membership. Lord Smith has confirmed that he is keen to ensure better interaction between trustees and the LGA, and that now is an appropriate time to begin to refresh the membership of the Board. Nominations will be invited through the Group Office and the Chief Executive will arrange for appropriate officer representation.

Resource implications

11. Whilst the charitable trust retains a budget of around £1 million, the Leadership Centre does not propose to appoint its own staff. Instead the Centre would be supported by LGA staff and work would be commissioned from appropriate suppliers.