

## Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

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**Title:** Improvement & Innovation Board  
**Date:** Tuesday 18 March 2014  
**Venue:** Smith Square 3&4, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

| Item | Decisions and actions   | Action |
|------|---|--------|
| 1    | <b>Declaration of Interest</b>  |        |
| 2    | <b>Managing Demand, Building Future Public Services Report</b><br><br>Michael Coughlin introduced the report to the board explaining the report was for noting and, built on the work previously presented at the Local government conference. He then invited Ben Lucas to present the report to the group. Ben went through the PowerPoint presentation on Managing Demand which covered the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The scale of the problem facing Local Government with cuts leaving a £14.46bn shortfall, leading to public service pressure.</li><li>• The need to find a new way to think about demand management, through looking at community resilience, early intervention, building on peoples assets, collaborative working and using citizen-centric policy.</li><li>• The need to tailor messaging to the right audience, using social media, and community targeting.</li><li>• The scale of the potential savings available if the demand management was reworked looking at the whole system and working with communities, using volunteers and working on early intervention.</li><li>• In conclusion he told the board that the new system of managing demand will require the drawing of new lines of social responsibility with communities' looking at the demand side as well as the supply. With communities taking more responsibility for their own areas and councils looking at how to change behaviour and develop shared values in communities.</li></ul> |        |

Questions were then invited from the board members and a number of topics were discussed including amongst others:

- Concerns with dealing with other partners, including lack of joined up timescales, unwillingness of outside organisations to spend

- money and poor communication leading to service breakdown.
- Community empowerment was discussed with a number of members suggesting community forums as a good way to reach out. However concerns over those involved being predominately middle class were raised and the need for good political leadership in order to make sure an underclass didn't develop was suggested.
- A number of members asked how the system would work when unexpected events occurred such as flooding. In these cases councils would have to go beyond their service responsibilities which some argued could mean partnerships broke down and communities felt they were not being listened to.

Ben Lucas responded to the points made explaining that whilst Local government was innovative, areas including communication, leadership and early intervention could be worked on. It was important to recognise that the social care money was always dwarfed by the care being given in the communities and with better engagement communities could be more resilient and productive.

### **Decisions**

The Board:

- i. Noted the report

## **3 Productivity Programme Update**

Cllr Peter Fleming introduced the report and invited Brian Reynolds to demonstrate the shared services map to the board. Brian then presented the website to the members demonstrating the current map and the one which would be going live in a few weeks' time. He explained the services the map offered which included 329 councils with 383 shared services.

The board were updated on the One Public Estate Programme which was looking to fund a further 15 councils, with a combined budget of £2.2 million. Brian explained the LGA was currently in a discussion with the cabinet office over a transparent bidding process for this funding.

Siobhan Coughlan updated the board on the Public Sector Network (PSN) explaining there were 20 councils still left to comply but most had an agreed plan in place and no councils were going to be cut off. However the process had been painful and it was important that the government learnt from this going forward, the LGA had been flagging up issues and had sent letters to the cabinet office. It was important that they were not in the same position in a years' time.

The discussion was opened up to the board and the following points were raised:

- The board thanked Siobhan for her hard work with the PSN and it was emphasised that that the LGA's work to help councils needed to be demonstrated to the cabinet office along with case studies of problems that had only been avoided due to Siobhan's work.

Members also outlined the need for the future meetings to be twin tracked with technical people and politicians.

- A number of members mentioned problems with trying to build housing on land owned by the Ministry of Defence and it was suggested this be looked into. Brian told the Board that the LGA would be meeting with the MoD shortly and they were aware of the problem.
- A member asked if there was a consistent way to measure the value of shared services, including in areas where they didn't work. It was explained that they had looked into the biggest 5 shared services and the results stood up, however it was difficult to find information on failed shared services. It was argued however that the figures of more and more councils sharing services demonstrated that they must be working.

### **Decisions**

- i. Members noted the updates to the productivity programme
- ii. Members noted the list of authorities in paragraph 20 for the extension of the learning disability services efficiency project.

## **4 Sector-led Improvement Evaluation: Key Findings - CONFIDENTIAL**

Juliet Whitworth and Kate Cooper introduced the report and went through a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the key findings of their evaluation. They explained to the board that the aims of the evaluation had been to make sure

- the approach has the confidence of the sector, the government and the public
- the sector has strengthened local accountability
- the sector is adopting the approach and maintains performance or improves
- LGA tools and services have a positive impact

Kate went through their methods including online surveys, telephone surveys seminars and then outlined the results. The overall message was positive and the main conclusions were that:

- The residents remain satisfied with and continue to trust their local council;
- The Sector-led improvement approach and the offer of LGA support was welcomed by the sector
- There was a high level of confidence within the sector in its capacity to monitor performance and improve
- There was a need to inform external stakeholders further about the benefits and successes of SLI

The next steps were explained and included maximising the impact of the findings, finalising the evaluation with the leadership board and developing

an action plan for launch.

The discussion was then opened up to the rest of the board, some members mentioned their concerns over the 70% customer satisfaction and emphasised that the LGA should be striving for a higher figure of around 80%. There were also questions raised about the level of people they were asking and some members argued people including scrutiny chairs should be being surveyed as well.

#### Decisions

- i. The Board authorised the lead members to approve the final report and the launch/promotion arrangements

## **5 Centre for Public Scrutiny**

Cllr Peter Fleming went through the member's recommendations and introduced Jessica Crowe from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Jessica went through the draft outline collaboration programme discussing how the work with the LGA could lead to greater public accountability, more streamlined services and the development of local government as a consumer champion. There would be greater collaboration with the LGA having Cllr Tony Jackson on the board of trustees to encourage a stronger relationship. Jessica invited members from the board to comment on the proposals, the following points were raised:

- Many members were against the idea of a public accounts committee without the money being devolved from government. A number of concerns were raised about going down the road before money was committed and felt until the government agreed to place the money in the hands of local areas, local government should not agree to setting up a public accounts committee. The government needing evidence that local government could handle the responsibility was questioned and it was argued that local and national government needed to move on the issue together.
- The offer of support programmes was praised however the need to work with nonexecutive councillors and show value beyond the leader was discussed.
- There was a discussion on how the new scrutiny system would work with concerns raised that the head of scrutiny would be set up as almost an executive member which some members felt unnecessary.

#### **Decisions**

- i. Members noted the report

## **6 Local Elections and the LGA's Change of Control Support Offer**

Dennis Skinner went through the report explaining the support that the LGA would be offering to change of control councils and that a guide for councils facing change of control had been approved and would be published in the next couple of weeks. This year the guide would also

provide advice for leaders as well as officers and chief executives.

There was some discussion over also providing support for opposition leaders who had lost control of their council. Other areas of concern including the rise of UKIP and more councils becoming joint and minority administrations were discussed. Dennis explained the LGA were prepared to accommodate and support a number of areas and principle advisors and member peers would be visiting the councils shortly after the election.

### **Decision**

- i. Members noted the report

## **7 Improvement and Innovation Board: Away Day June 2014**

Dennis Skinner introduced the item explaining that the date for the away day had been set at 2<sup>nd</sup> June. The day would be a mix of plenary and small group discussions. He told members he would appreciate their views on what the main topics would be and who to invite on top of the board members.

Cllr Peter Fleming said it was key that the new role of the Improvement and Innovation board taking on all improvement work for the LGA would need to be discussed and it was important that at the very least all of the chairs of boards were invited.

A small discussion about London being the venue was discussed but it was agreed this was the easiest place for most people to get to.

### **Decision**

1. Members noted the report

## **8 Note of the last meeting**

Cllr Jill Shortland and Cllr Shirley Flint asked for their councils to be switched in the minutes.

Cllr Howard Sykes asked for it to be recorded that he did attend the board meeting in October.

The minutes were then agreed as a true record.

## **Appendix A -Attendance**

| Position/Role | Councillor         | Authority                  |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Chairman      | Cllr Peter Fleming | Sevenoaks District Council |
| Vice-Chairman |                    |                            |

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Shirley Flint  | North Kesteven District Council  |
| Members         | Cllr John Blackie<br>Cllr Tim Cheetham<br>Cllr Helen Holland<br>Cllr Imran Hussain<br>Cllr Tony McDermott MBE<br>Cllr Glen Miller<br>Cllr Teresa O'Neill<br>Mr Richard Priestman<br><br>Mr Philip Sellwood<br>Cllr Jill Shortland OBE | North Yorkshire County Council<br>Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council<br>Bristol City Council<br>Bradford Metropolitan District Council<br>Halton Borough Council<br>Bradford Metropolitan District Council<br>Bexley Council<br>Local Government Improvement and<br>Development<br>Energy Saving Trust (EST)<br>Somerset County Council |
| Apologies       | Cllr Kate Hollern<br>Cllr Claire Kober<br>Cllr Rory Palmer<br>Cllr Richard Stay   | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council<br>Haringey Council<br>Leicester City Council<br>Central Bedfordshire Council  |
| In Attendance   |   |  |
| LGA Officers    |   |  |