

*

Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

Title: Improvement & Innovation Board
Date: Tuesday 19 January 2016
Venue: Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome and Declarations of Interest The Chairman welcomed board members to the meeting. He noted apologies from Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton CBE, Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE, Cllr Howard Sykes MBE and Cllr Claudia Webbe. Declarations of Interest Mayor Dave Hodgson, Cllr Keith Glazier and Cllr Sue Whitaker declared that their authorities had received a One Public Estate Award.	
2	Board Priorities and Portfolios The Chairman and Dennis Skinner introduced a report proposing a revised set of Board priorities in the light of discussions at the previous meeting. Members reaffirmed the following proposed portfolio areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• research and sharing;• reputation and communications;• devolution;• finance;• and housing. Members also expressed interest in a proposed European/International portfolio, subject to the Board being given a lead role after the June referendum. Members felt that the proposed regional ambassadorial role could provide a helpful “ strategic connection” between the Board and existing regional lead member peers and a resource to promote the offer through regional networks. Members asked for further information about how the regional role might operate. It was also suggested that it would be helpful to receive more regular updates about the improvement offer.	

Decisions

Members **agreed** to proceed with the portfolio areas listed above and to the creation of the new Regional Ambassador roles.

Actions

Board Members to be invited to express an interest in the portfolios and regional ambassador roles with the final list of appointees then being agreed by lead members.

- research and sharing;
- reputation and communications;
- devolution;
- finance;
- housing.

Members **agreed** to add a sixth ‘ European and international’ priority to this list, pending the outcome of discussions with the LGA Political Group leaders.

Actions

Each political group will identify members who are interested in leading on one of the six priority areas listed above, with a final list of appointees then being agreed through the lead member process.

Each political group will identify members who are interested in taking on an ambassadorial role, with a final list of appointees then being agreed through the lead member process.

Officers to discuss the new priorities and roles with regional member peers, national lead member peers to see how they can best be integrated with the Board’ s existing key work streams of improvement, leadership, productivity and transparency.

3 Highlighting Leadership offer: 2015/16

The Chairman and Dennis Skinner introduced a report proposing a revised set of Board priorities in the light of discussions at the previous meeting.

Members reaffirmed the following proposed portfolio areas:

- research and sharing;
- reputation and communications;
- devolution;
- finance;
- and housing.

Members also expressed interest in a proposed European/International portfolio, subject to the Board being given a lead role after the June referendum.

Members felt that the proposed regional ambassadorial role could provide a helpful “ strategic connection” between the Board and existing regional lead member peers and a resource to promote the offer through regional networks. Members asked for further information about how the regional role might operate. It was also suggested that it would be helpful to receive more regular updates about the improvement offer.

Decisions

Members **agreed** to proceed with the portfolio areas listed above and to the creation of the new Regional Ambassador roles.

Actions

Board Members to be invited to express an interest in the portfolios and regional ambassador roles with the final list of appointees then being agreed by lead members.

4 Productivity Programme

Cllr Shirley Pannell and Alan Finch introduced the report, which outlined the progress being made in the Productivity Programme. Brian Reynolds, Head of the One Public Estate Programme, was present to update members on progress and the recent extension of the scheme.

Cllr Pannell highlighted the work done on the digital transformation offer; the publication of the interim report on health and social care integration, the findings of which were well received; and progress in updating the shared services map. She then introduced a new video podcast about the Productivity Experts Programme. Members welcomed the podcast and thanked Joanne Straw for her work in putting it together.

Brian Reynolds informed members that the One Public Estate programme, is a Cabinet Office funded programme to help local and national government use their land and property more efficiently. He highlighted four features of the programme of interest to the Board:

1. The creation of a powerful ministerial star chamber that aims to help resolve disputes between councils and central government.
2. Greater flexibility for local authorities to use capital receipts for investing.
3. Priority purchaser status for local authorities when central departments sell assets.
4. A new duty on central departments to engage with local government when disposing of assets.

Members thought that the accompanying report highlighted a host of valuable projects that the One Public Estate programme is engaged in and emphasised the importance of greater clarity around the cost/benefit analysis of the programme and of the LGA sharing lessons learnt about

best practice from these projects with the sector more widely.

Decision

Members **noted** the updates and progress on the Productivity Programme.

Action

Brian Reynolds will distribute a brochure to board members containing further details and statistics about the One Public Estate programme.

5 Children's services improvement and intervention

The Chairman introduced the report, which had also been presented to the Children and Young People Board and which summarised and proposed a response to the Prime Minister's announcement of new measures to formalise the process for removing failing children's services from local authority control.

Members thought that providing support to authorities facing children's services inspections should have a high priority within the LGA's sector-led improvement offer and that authorities should be strongly encouraged to take up the LGA's support offer whilst recognising that at the same time there needed to be some targeting of the support to make sure it reached the councils that need it most.

Members were critical of the methodology that Ofsted use to assess children's services. They thought it unacceptable that in one of best child protection systems in world, two thirds of local authorities are categorised as inadequate or requiring improvement, and noted that, although inspections are a crucial component of a well-functioning system, Ofsted's inspection regime appears to hinder, rather than help, councils who receive an inadequate rating.

Decision

The Board **agreed** to propose to the LGA Executive that:

- Support for children's services should have a high priority within the LGA's sector-led improvement offer, given the number of councils currently in intervention and at risk of being judged inadequate by Ofsted.
- The children's services support offer should prioritise councils that have not yet been inspected under the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework and are at potential risk of an inadequate judgement.
- The LGA's political and professional networks should be used to encourage these councils to have a full Safeguarding Peer Review

or Safeguarding Practice/Care Practice Diagnostic.

- An enhanced support offer to councils should be developed to deal with any issues identified following a peer review or diagnostic that put a council at risk of an inadequate judgement at their next inspection.
- For councils judged inadequate, the existing support offer should be retained and enhanced, with a focus on supporting them to produce a credible improvement plan and maintain sufficient progress to avoid full-scale Department for Education (DfE) intervention in line with the new proposals

Action

Officers to report the Board's views to the LGA Executive meeting on Thursday 21 January.

6 Performance and Finance - 6 monthly update

The Chairman introduced the six-month monitoring report, which presents a summary of performance against the LGA's business plan and Memorandum of Understanding with DCLG in respect of our revenue support grant (RSG) funded programmes.

Overall performance is strong. Of the 26 key targets 15 are rag-rated green and the remaining 11 are on course to be delivered and currently rated amber.

Members welcomed the report and indicated that it would also be interesting to have some qualitative feedback on the achievements of different RSG-funded programmes to complement the statistical feedback. Members felt that children's services as an area might benefit from greater RSG funding in the future.

Dennis Skinner explained that the RSG funding comes from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which had expectations about its use. DCLG was likely to be unhappy about significant amounts being spent on children's services improvement in the absence of funding from DfE.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

7 LGA Boards' improvement activity

The Chairman introduced the report, which detailed the improvement activities undertaken by other LGA Boards.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

8 Minutes of the last meeting

The note of the previous meeting was **agreed**.

It was noted that Cllrs Dominic Gilham and Barry Wood attended the last meeting but were not included on that attendance list.

Action

The Member Services Officer will check and update the attendance list for the previous meeting.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Vice-Chairman	Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Judi Billing MBE	North Hertfordshire District Council
	Cllr Shirley Pannell	North Kesteven District Council
Members	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Robert Gould	Dorset County Council
	Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
	Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
	Cllr Dominic Gilham	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Phil Davies	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Darren Cooper	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Bob Price	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Lewis Herbert	Cambridge City Council
	Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Sue Whitaker	Norfolk County Council
	Cllr John Blackie	Richmondshire District Council
	Cllr Mike Haines	Teignbridge District Council
	Cllr Laura Conway	North Kesteven District Council
	Cllr Cherry Beath	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Mr Richard Priestman	
	Mr Philip Sellwood	
Apologies	Cllr Stephen Parnaby	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
	OBE	
	Cllr Claudia Webbe	Islington Council
	Sir Stephen Houghton	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	CBE	
	Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council