

Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

Title: Improvement & Innovation Board
Date: Wednesday 8 March 2017
Venue: Rooms A&B, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street,
London, EC1M 5LG

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No declarations of interest were made.</p> <p>The apologies were noted as listed at Appendix A.</p>	
2	<p>Note of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>Cllr Judi Billing gave an update on Item 7 from the minutes. She thanked the LGA for the successful launch of #NewConversations guidance to help councils engage and consult communities effectively, but expressed disappointment at the numbers of councillors present. She announced proposals for a second event likely to be in Bradford, in June and that all Board members would be invited to attend. Members were invited to share any particular community engagement issues for further exploration as part of the programme.</p> <p>Decision</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.</p>	
3	<p>Productivity Programme</p> <p>Alan Finch (Principal Adviser, Finance and Productivity) introduced the paper, which updated on the LGA's Productivity Programme over the second half of 2016/17. He highlighted that the programme was on track to achieve its objectives as set by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).</p> <p>Cllr Sue Woodward (Staffordshire County Council) and Wayne Mortiboys (Staffordshire County Council District Commissioning Lead, Lichfield) then gave a presentation on the councils' work as part of the LGA funded Design in the Public Sector Programme to develop a community-based approach to its work with 'at risk' families. In doing so, they summarised the creation of a community interest company 'Spark' and their joint</p>	

working to retain and run some children's centres which would otherwise have closed. Wayne outlined the project process, associated costs, intended user-base, plans for future evaluation and lessons learned such as adapting the model for potential restructuring of libraries in the same area. The Board were invited to undertake a site visit to see the centre first hand should they wish.

Discussion

In the discussion that followed, Members' comments included:

LGA Productivity Programme

- During the discussion, members asked that the format of the report be augmented to provide a high level summary of key projects, their objectives, outcomes and the extent to which objectives are on track to be met, or not.
- Members asked about the criteria for and monitoring of grant allocations, to ensure a good balance and if there was a correlation between those authorities yet to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) and those applying for grants as part of the productivity programme.

Staffordshire County Council presentation

- Members thanked Cllr Woodward and Wayne Mortiboys for their presentation and enquired about evidence that there was a greater utilisation of the 'Spark' centres by target groups and the cost implications.

Decisions

That the Improvement and Innovation Board:

- i. **noted** the contents of the report; and
- ii. **agreed** that more robust evaluation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms be implemented to ensure that the programme meets its objectives;
- iii. Cllr Woodward and Wayne Mortiboys be thanked for their presentation.

Actions

1. **Specify** individual project objectives and whether they have been met in future updates, through a clear reporting template. **Alan Finch**
2. **Share** assessment criteria for digital grants programme to inform members about the process. **Alan Finch**
3. **Provide** members with a digital version of the presentation. **Jess Norman**
4. **Analyse** take up of support and cross-reference to take up of the CPC process. **Alan Finch**

4 Independent Evaluation of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Programme: responding to the recommendations

Andy Bates (Principal Adviser) introduced the item which set out the findings of the independent evaluation of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge programme, along with the initial response. Some recommendations were being considered for immediate implementation, whilst Members' guidance was sought on a number of other recommendations outlined in the report.

Discussion

In the discussion that followed, Members comments' included:

- Members of the Board discussed the report from Cardiff University and expressed disappointment that it had not gone further in identifying more tangible or quantifiable data evidencing the impact of the Corporate Peer Challenge. Members highlighted the importance of evidencing the impact as an integral part of continuing to strengthen the sector-led improvement offer.
- Going forward, the Board suggested securing more systematic, structured and quantitative feedback from Leaders and Chief Executives from participating councils.
- Whilst considering the recommendations in paragraph 7 of the report, members highlighted that a number of the recommendations already reflect current LGA practice.
- The Board discussed the challenge of encouraging all councils to actively engage in peer challenges and highlighted the importance of a proactive approach so as to mitigate against any potential future Government intervention. In doing so, the value of opposition members in making the case for CPCs within their authorities was emphasised.
- Members agreed the aim of the recommendation at 7.14, but concluded that publication of non-engaging councils would not necessarily deliver the desired outcome and risked being counterproductive. Members noted that details of non-participating councils were already shared with Lead Members and the political group offices to pursue through political channels.
- Members also suggested that meetings of the appropriate lead regional member peer and Principal Adviser with the Leader and Chief Executive might be a good way of overcoming any reluctance to take up the CPC offer, along with professional routes where necessary and appropriate.
- Whilst the Board concurred with 7.19 in principle, members noted that where Member Peers were not from the ruling group, the expectation should be for them to seek to influence and encourage take up by their authority.

Decisions

The Improvement and Innovation Board:

- i. **noted** the key findings from the independent evaluation of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Programme;
- ii. **agreed** the evaluation's recommendations and LGA's initial responses as set out in paragraph 7.1 to 7.13;
- iii. **agreed** that the recommendation to publish a list of councils that have not yet engaged with CPC (paragraph 7.14) not be adopted;
- iv. **agreed** recommendations and actions 7.17 – 7.19, subject to amendment to reflect differing expectations for Member Peers that were not from within the ruling group; and
- v. **agreed** that systematic and structured feedback following Peer Reviews be sought from elected members and officers within participating councils.

Actions

1. Continue to provide a confidential list of those authorities currently yet to undertake or commit to a CPC to Lead Members and Political Group Offices. **Paul Clarke**
2. Implement systematic and structured post CPC feedback mechanisms with participating members and officers. **Principle Advisers**

5 LGA Boards' Improvement Activity

Nick Easton (Improvement Co-ordination Manager) introduced this item which provided an update on improvement activity undertaken by the other eight policy Boards since the last I&I Board meeting.

Discussion

Members raised the issue that following the presentation on integration by Dame Louise Casey (Director General, Casey Review Team) at the LGA Executive the previous week, the improvement team should consider how best to support improvement in this area.

Decisions

The Improvement and Innovation Board:

- i. **noted** the contents of the progress report on improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards; and
- ii. **asked** that officers report to Lead Members on proposals for supporting community cohesion improvement in the light of the Casey review on Integration.

Action

Consider appropriate improvement support tools to support councils with community cohesion and integration and report back to a future I&I Board Lead Members meeting in the first instance. **Mark Norris**

6 Confidential

The remainder of the items on the agenda were confidential, any press or public present were excluded from the meeting.

7 Reputation campaign: Presentation

Hannah Berry (Head of Campaigns and Digital Communications) presented the item, which was followed by a confidential discussion. Members agreed a decision in line with their discussion.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
Vice-Chairman	Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE	Bedford Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Judi Billing MBE Cllr Ron Woodley	North Hertfordshire District Council Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Members	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE Cllr Linda Robinson Cllr Harvey Siggs Cllr Michael Wilcox Cllr Barry Wood Cllr Bob Price Cllr Phil Davies Cllr Sue Woodward Cllr Sue Whitaker Cllr Bob Jennings Cllr Cherry Beath Cllr Glen Sanderson JP Sir Stephen Houghton CBE Cllr Mike Haines Cllr Howard Sykes MBE Mr Richard Priestman Mr Philip Sellwood	Sevenoaks District Council Wychavon District Council Somerset County Council Lichfield District Council Cherwell District Council Oxford City Council Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Staffordshire County Council Norfolk County Council Epping Forest District Council Bath & North East Somerset Council Northumberland Council Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Teignbridge District Council Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Local Government Improvement and Development Energy Saving Trust (EST)
Apologies	Cllr Robert Gould Cllr Andy Moorhead Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Dorset County Council Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Plymouth City Council