

## Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	Improvement & Innovation Board
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 28 March 2019
<b>Venue:</b>	Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 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
<b>1</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  The chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted the apologies given. The following declarations of interest were made:  Cllr Prior declared his association with De Montfort University, who has been invited to tender for the LGA. This was in reference to item three.	
<b>2</b>	<b>One Public Estate</b>  Ellen Vernon, Craig Egglestone and Joe Garrod (of MHCLG) presented item two. Their PowerPoint presentation included the following information regarding the One Public Estate (OPE) programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The programme is co-sponsored by the Cabinet Office and MHCLG.</li><li>• The presentation included details of OPE's partnerships, the programmes partnership model, and an overview of the phases of funding.</li><li>• Details around housing and place making (which included details of hubs, regeneration and new communities)</li><li>• The presentation focused on land release fund project – land owned by local government.</li><li>• Joe Garrod of MHCLG then update members on the Waltham Forest project, which is focused on the re-development of the council campus, and plans to build 300+ units of housing. This development project had created a lot of interest with developers, and will deliver 50 per cent of affordable housing. Joe also updated members on the coronation square development and re-development of Whips Cross Hospital (which aims to deliver 1500 homes).</li><li>• Joe discussed the lessons learnt throughout the project, and paid compliments to the extremely helpful relationships with the Cabinet office and the LGA.</li><li>• Ellen then concluded the presentation, which focused on the future of OPE, including details of the funding sustainability of the project, and patient investment for health-related projects. This included details of OPE's phase 8 and the 2019 Spending Review.</li></ul>	

Following the presentation, members then discussed the following:

Members brought up stakeholder relations, and made particular reference to the challenge working with Network Rail. Members also raised certain funding aspects of the Homes England project, and raised concerns that funding for these are not going to the correct area. Members questioned if there was potential to working with Homes England? Ellen feedback that developing relationships with all stakeholders are key, and because Homes England is still a relatively new project, they are still developing their own stakeholder relationships

Members also gave examples of central government departments seemingly arguing with each other around house-building, and how stakeholder relationships are key to the success of this project. Members went on to suggest that central government departments need to 'buy-in' to the OPE programme, as well as having a 'barrier busting' type-team, so there are is no risk of projects being blocked by central government departments. Ellen stated that the purpose of the OPE programme is to be a 'barrier-busting' type team, but that at this stage, it is better to gather intelligence at a local level and feedback to the Cabinet Office.

Members raised concerns regarding the timeframes of spending funds, as well as delivery deadlines. Officers fed-back that reporting jumps in increments due to the latest report spanning back to October.

Members discussed the role the NHS plays, as well as the differences of costs of NHS development projects, and who is best to develop these in-line with OPE. Officers stated in response to this that it is overseen by local areas and local NHS trusts. The Chair concluded this discussion area by stating that the role of the Cabinet Office is to oversee these conversations, and ensure everyone involved is working along the same principals to deliver more housing for residents. The discussion then turned to the differences between social housing and affordable homes, and examples were given where some affordable housing were not affordable for residents.

The discussion concluded between members and officers over community engagement, and examples of best practices were given in areas such as Hampshire.

Following the discussion the following **action** was made:

- Members noted the update.

### **3 Highlighting Political Leadership offer: 2018/19 work update**

Helen Jenkins and Lead Member Cllr Judi Billing MBE, introduced item three. The report updates members on the Board's work regarding engagement figures for 2018/19 Highlighting Political and Managerial Leadership offer. Cllr Billings stated that she has been overseeing this portfolio of work for around 20 years and is incredibly passionate about it, given improvements to leadership can always be made. Cllr Billing concluded that interest for this work is on the up, with more and more local authorities and elected Cllrs becoming interested.

Following the introduction, members discussed the following:

Members discussed mentoring programmes for elected Cllrs' with autism, including those older Cllrs' who potentially do not have a diagnosis of autism, and possibly feeding some of this mentoring into the LGA's work.

Members discussed locations of these programmes, and discussed why there was a London-focus venue for holding events. Members went on to discuss that travelling can pose a real issue for elected officials around the country travelling down to London. Cllr Billing responded to this, by stating that whilst venue locations are regularly reviewed, holding events in central hubs such as London offers a wider range of delegates attending and more chance to share best practices.

The discussion turned to Wales and elected officials involvement with the programme. Cllr Billing responded by stating that they have received various different levels of interest from Welsh regions, but continue to work closely with the Welsh LGA on this matter.

Members concluded the discussion by holding similar events but at officer level – particularly monitoring and section 151 officers, as well as those who work closely with elected members. In response to this, Cllr Billing stated that this is a very important area of work, if only to get across the role of an elected member. Helen Jenkins also stated that programmes for officers are being progressed.

Following the discussion, the following **action** was noted:

- Members noted the update.

#### **4 Efficient and Intelligent councils programme**

Item four was presented by Susan Attard and Graham Simmons (from iESE). The item updated the Board on the progress made with the Efficient and Intelligent councils programme, and a PowerPoint presentation was given to demonstrate how the self-assessment tool works, along with sharing the content that has been developed so far.

The presentation made particular reference to:

- Progress of the hub to date;
- key elements of the improvement model and underpinning of the self-assessment tool;
- a brief prototype version of the self-assessment tool;
- aims of the project;
- the improvement model
- questions and theirs structure asked during the initial stages;
- examples and critical success factors; and
- resources of the hub.

Graham then delivered a live demonstration of the hub, and the end look.

Susan concluded the presentation by requesting members test the

programme and feedback any comments they may have, with particular focus on content, language, and how the system works. Susan stated that they are aiming for a soft launch towards the end of April 2019, and to formally launch it at the LGA's annual conference in July. Susan stated that MHCLG are extremely interested in the tool, and the main benefit of this work is that it was delivered by the sector, for the sector.

The Chairman stated that the sector was under pressure by MHCLG, and so it is extremely positive to hear that they are interested in this work.

Members discussed how this work related to peer challenges? Susan stated that it is complimentary to peer challenges, to be used possibly as a pre-cursor.

The following action were noted for this item:

- members noted the update.

## **5 Strategic supplier relationship management**

Tina Holland introduced item five for members.

This report provided an update on the LGA's work and relationship management with key suppliers to local government, working together to develop a more strategic relationship. Tina stated the report also provides further information in relation to procurement matters for councils following Brexit. Tina concluded that the LGA had held many meetings with these key suppliers in order to create this relationship, and that the supplemental report that was sent earlier in the day goes into further details of the main key suppliers.

Following the presentation members discussed the following:

Members raised the issue of in-house council procurement staff, and how many of these skilled workers had been 'hollowed out' in recent years, allowing for mistakes to be made. In response to this, Tina stated that further guidance from government will soon be made available, and the LGA will be meeting with procurement officers to look at what areas need to be considered when outsourcing. Members welcomed this news, but stated that these meetings should also be made available to elected members and portfolio holders.

The discussion turned to in-sourcing services for councils, and what advice is available for local authorities to in-source rather than out-source. Tina responded that CIPHA has previously provided some guidance; some of this may be out of date, and therefore may need updating.

Members raised concerns that the government advises that the suppliers listed in the reports all seem to be in varying areas of financial concern, yet the government refuses to advise not to invest in out-sourcing with these suppliers. However, members did note that if the government did advise this, local government would pull their contract from a company which would then go into bankruptcy anyway. Tina stated that she understood this dilemma, and that she believes that her colleagues within

government do try their hardest to mitigate risks for the local government sector.

The Chairman concluded the discussion with the following **actions**:

- Officers to pull together information to have a single point of contact for this work.
- Further information to be provided for in-sourcing for councils; the Chairman noted that this is one way the sector can control costs, as well as some risks.
- The Chairman noted issues the sector was facing when outsourcing; particularly when only two companies bid for a contract, the price does go up rapidly.

## **6 Data sharing and data standards**

Item six was introduced by lead member Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE, who stated the LGA's agreed policy on local authorities publishing data, outside of specific data returns to government, is that it should be published in any way they choose. Lead member, Mayor Hodgson stated the report discusses the growing view across central government of more and more data being published in a standard format, and asks board members to consider how the local government sector should respond. Lead member Mayor Hodgson made particular reference to paragraphs 19.1, 19.2 and 19.3, which were the recommendations set out in the report.

Following the introduction of the item, members then discussed the following:

Members discussed the recent implementation of GDPR, and agreed that this will not work with top-down approach, and needs to be led by local areas. The Chairman discussed national data sets that are already available for the public. However these are costly, particularly when setting up a new one [data set].

Members stated that in an ideal world, systems and platforms talking to each other is the optimal position to be in. Members agreed that this is a good principal, however, a significant cost involved. Members then discussed at length the benefits of migrating data sets, however, did reflect also on the significant cost to this approach.

To conclude, member and the Chairman made opted to go with option three, which is laid out in paragraph 19.3 in the report. Members also stated they were interested in option two (paragraph 19.2 in the report), as a second option. However, the Chairman stated officers should take a default position of questioning why are government requesting this information, and what will it be used for? Residents should always be at the forefront of this decision making and data use.

The following **actions** was noted for this update:

- Officer to take forward option three, which is laid out in paragraph 19.3 in the report.
- Members noted the update.

## **7 Innovation Zone update**

Lusi Manukyan introduced item seven to members. Lusi's update included details of the different applications received for the Innovation Zone at this year's LGA's annual conference. Project applications included a virtual reality cycling system that allowed you to cycle around different cities in the world. Lusi encouraged members to promote individual aspects of the innovation zone at this year's conference.

Following the update, the following **action** was noted:

- Members noted the update.

## **8 Any Other Business**

The following additional business was raised:

Members raised concerns over Cllrs running for office receiving abuse, and requested more information and support by the LGA be made available. Members also agreed that families of those running are also put under distinct pressure and stress. The Chairman responded that this is an area very prevalent, and could possibly be addressed in the 'Be a Councillor' programme, alongside the Group Political Offices, who could also offer support for this. The Chairman also noted that some of these pressures and bullying tactic are internal, and are perpetrated by different factions in all political parties. Dennis Skinner, Head of Improvement, stated that a recent paper was considered by the LGA's Leadership Board on Councillor Conduct, and the LGA are raising this at the highest levels.

Other business included:

- The Chairman thanked LGA officer Nick Easton for all his hard work and contributions to the Improvement and Innovation Board, and wished nick well in his retirement.
- The Chairman thanked Cllr Phil Davis, who will be stepping down as a Cllr as of May this year.
- The Chairman wished all members good luck with the upcoming May elections.

## **10 Note of the Previous Meeting**

Members agreed notes to the previous meeting held on Monday 31 January 2019.

## **Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District 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 Steve Count Cllr Donna Jones JP Cllr Laura Miller Cllr Phil North Cllr Joy Allen Cllr Phil Davies Cllr Tudor Evans OBE Cllr Abdul Jabbar MBE Cllr Vince Maple Cllr Alice Perry Cllr Liz Green  Sir Stephen Houghton CBE Cllr Alan Connett Cllr Mike Haines Mr Richard Priestman	Cambridgeshire County Council Portsmouth City Council Purbeck District Council  Durham County Council Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Plymouth City Council Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Medway Council Islington Council Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council  Teignbridge District Council Teignbridge District Council Local Government Improvement and Development
Apologies	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE Cllr Charlotte Haitham Taylor Cllr Damian White Cllr Glen Sanderson JP Mr Philip Sellwood	Bracknell Forest Borough Council Wokingham Borough Council  Havering London Borough Council Northumberland Council Energy Saving Trust (EST)
In Attendance	Cllr Judy Jennings	