

Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming

INNOVATION

Voter registration

1. I appeared on Daily Politics on BBC 2 to discuss voter registration for last month's local and European elections. When discussing the time it takes for people to register to vote, I explained that: "We need to go through and check that people say who they really are. We are enacting the rules that are set down for us."

I also spoke about how being able to register online from the summer will help as it will allow people to register at any time and not at forced points in the year. You can watch the interview [online](#).

IMPROVEMENT

Evaluation of Sector-led Improvement

2. We launched the results of the evaluation of sector-led improvement on 22 May. The report demonstrates that: residents remain satisfied with and continue to trust their local council; councils' performance continues to improve, and the approach and offer of support from the LGA is welcomed and valued by councils. This is a considerable achievement for the sector against a backdrop of councils nationally having their funding cut by 40% in real terms since 2010, increased demographic pressures and national policy changes.

Launching the report, I highlighted that: "The achievements of councils through the sector-led improvement approach demonstrate its success and shows what councils can achieve by working together and supporting one another rather than through external inspection and targets. The previous top-down approach was estimated to cost £2 billion a year, whereas sector-led improvement is locally-driven, much cheaper and more effective".

Improvement and Innovation Board Away Day

3. I chaired a successful away day on 2 June, well attended by both members of the LGA Improvement and Innovation Board and representatives from other LGA Boards and organisations. The away day focussed on the future of sector-led improvement in light of the evaluation findings and also the new role of the Board arising from the LGA Governance review. The results will inform further Board discussions.

LEADERSHIP

Highlighting Leadership Offer

4. Following the Improvement and Innovation Board's review and revision of the LGA's programme of leadership development activities in late 2013, we are now launching our new look 'Highlighting Leadership' offer.
5. Highlighting Leadership is the new umbrella brand that has been designed around the three refreshed and revised areas of leadership development support provided by the LGA.
 - 5.1 The first and most prominent is Highlighting Political Leadership – a suite of development programmes and resources providing support for newly elected local politicians through to council leaders, which includes the Leadership Academy, Next Generation as well as

- new additions such as the Leaders' Programme, and e-learning modules focused on the core skills for community leadership.
- 5.2 The second is Highlighting Managerial Leadership, which includes the National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) and the KBA Strategic Leadership in Modern Local Government Programme.
 - 5.3 The third and new area is Highlighting Top Team Leadership and includes a new support offer for the council leader and cabinet together, to help improve strategic direction and leadership of the council.
6. The Highlighting Political Leadership brochure provides an overview of all development programmes available for politicians and the new navigation tool at www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development helps councillors find the most appropriate development opportunity on offer. I would like to encourage you to take a look at the refreshed offer and share with colleagues.

TRANSPARENCY

Open Data

7. The LGA received a further £ 1.7 million in grant funding from BIS and Cabinet office for local authorities to release open data and make better use of it. Nineteen local authorities that received funding in 2013/14 are completing their projects releasing vital information to foster regeneration, social accessibility, tourism and new digital products and services in their locality (see our [website](#)).
8. Funding for 2014/15 is now available and Cllr Tim Cheetham is chairing the review panel for local breakthrough fund projects. He says about last year's projects: "Local authorities have already proven themselves to be committed to open data and this funding will help councils develop data publishing further. There are some great examples of authorities using open data to benefit their communities and we hope this money will help local groups and businesses access data and drive social and economic growth in their areas."
9. The LGA is holding three events during June across the country to share the learning from these projects and to inform about future funding opportunities. Cllr Tim Cheetham will speak at some of these events and will also facilitate a panel discussion on innovation through open data at the LGA conference.

Contact officer: Dennis Skinner
Position: Head of Leadership and Productivity
Phone no: 020 7664 3017
E-mail: Dennis.Skinner@local.gov.uk