

Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>Cllr Tony Jackson declared an interest as a member of the CfPS Board of Trustees</p> <p>Philip Sellwood declared an interest as a Fellow of the RSA</p>	
2	<p>Managing Demand, Building Future Public Services Report</p> <p>Michael Coughlin introduced the report and then invited Ben Lucas to make a presentation to the board. Ben covered the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scale of the problem facing local government with funding shortfalls leading to pressures on public services • The need to find a new way to think about managing demand for services by looking at community resilience, early intervention, collaborative working and using citizen-centric policy • The need to tailor messaging to the right audience, using social media, and community targeting • The scale of the potential savings available if demand management was reworked looking at the whole system and working with communities, using volunteers and working on early intervention. • In conclusion, any new approach to managing demand would require new lines of social responsibility with communities, looking at the demand side as well as the supply side, with communities taking more responsibility for their own areas and councils looking at how to change behaviour and develop shared values in communities. <p>Questions were then invited from board members. Members gave a number of examples illustrating how their own councils had approached demand management and raised a number of points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties dealing with other partners, including lack of joined up timescales, unwillingness of outside organisations to invest in prevention and poor communications; • Community empowerment - concerns about how to avoid just 'the 	

usual suspects' being involved, and the need for good political leadership in order to ensure all sectors of communities were involved;

- The question of how the approach 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 breaking down and communities feeling 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 social care funding was always dwarfed by the care being given in communities by communities and with better engagement, communities could be more resilient and productive.

Decisions

The Board:

- i. Noted the report.

Actions

Officers to action in light of members comments.

Michael
Coughlin

3 Productivity Programme Update

Cllr Shirley Flint introduced the report and invited Brian Reynolds to update members and demonstrate the new shared services map to the board. Brian then presented the website to members, demonstrating the current map and the one which would be going live in a few days' time. The map shows that 337 councils across the country were engaged in 383 shared service arrangements resulting in £346m efficiency savings to date.

The board was updated on the One Public Estate Programme, which would be funding a further 15 councils, as a result of additional funding from HMT. Brian explained that the LGA was currently discussing a transparent bidding process for this funding with the Cabinet Office.

Siobhan Coughlan updated the board on the Public Service Network (PSN) explaining there were 20 councils still left to comply but most had an agreed plan in place and hopefully no councils were going to be cut off. However the process had been difficult and it was important that the government learnt from the experience to date for the future; the LGA had been flagging up issues and had sent letters to the Cabinet Office. It was important not to be in the same position in a year's time.

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

- The board thanked Siobhan for her hard work on the PSN and it was emphasised 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 future discussions to be twin tracked with technical officers and with 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.
- It was 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 the biggest five shared services arrangements had been examined and the results stood up, but that it was difficult to find information on failed shared services. That more and more councils were sharing services demonstrated that they were working.

Decisions

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

Actions

Officers to action in light of members comments

Brian
Reynolds

4 Sector-led Improvement Evaluation: Key Findings - CONFIDENTIAL

Juliet Whitworth and Kate Cooper introduced the report and gave a presentation, which outlined the key findings of the evaluation. They explained that the aims of the evaluation had been to assess the extent to which:

- the approach had the confidence of the sector, the government and the public
- the sector had strengthened local accountability
- the sector was adopting the approach and maintained performance or improved
- LGA tools and services had had a positive impact.

Kate explained the research methods which included online surveys, telephone surveys and seminars, then outlined the results. The overall message was positive and the main conclusions were that:

- Residents remain satisfied with and continue to trust their local council and leaders and chief executives were confident about the strength of local accountability in their areas

- The sector-led improvement (SLI) approach and the offer of LGA support had been welcomed by the sector. Take up and satisfaction with the support offer was high
- Over 90% per cent of leaders and chief executives who were aware of the offer said that the support and resources offered had had a positive impact on their authority
- 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, reporting to the Leadership Board and the LGA Executive and developing an action plan for launch.

The discussion was then opened up to the board; members were pleased with the positive nature of the results but felt it would be important to consider how best to promote the results to national stakeholders, councils and others. Some members questioned whether the sector should be content with 70% customer satisfaction levels. It was generally agreed that this was a good achievement in the light of current pressures but that the sector should not be complacent.

Decisions

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

Juliet
Whitworth
and Kate
Cooper

Actions

Officers to finalise the report and develop a proposed “action plan” covering the proposed launch and dissemination arrangements for lead members approval

5 Centre for Public Scrutiny

Cllr Peter Fleming explained that the LGA had a long-standing relationship with CfPS and that following a recent review, new arrangements to facilitate closer working had been agreed. Jessica Crowe from the Centre for Public Scrutiny outlined the key points from the draft collaboration programme including governance and scrutiny; sharing and promoting good practice; supporting sector led improvement and specific projects. In addition it was reported that Cllr Tony Jackson had been invited on the board of trustees to facilitate a stronger relationship.

Jessica also outlined CfPS' proposals for local public accounts committees which sat alongside the LGA's Rewiring proposals for an area-based approach to local public finances.

Jessica invited members from the board to comment on the proposals; the follow key points were raised:

- Many members did not feel they could support the idea of local

public accounts committees without funding first being devolved from government to local areas. A number of concerns were raised about progressing this before funding was committed and the board felt until the government agreed to place the money in the hands of local areas, local government should not agree to setting up local public accounts committees.

- The intention for closer working relationships between LGA and CfPS was welcomed along with the proposed programme of activity. It was also felt that there was a need to work more with non-executive councillors.

Decisions

- i. Members noted the report.

Actions

Officers to action in light of members comments

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

Dennis Skinner presented the report explaining the support that the LGA would be offering to authorities that change control as a result of the forthcoming local elections. This included a guide for councils that might face becoming no overall control. This year the guide would also provide advice for leaders as well as chief executives.

Members agreed with the importance of offering support to councils facing changes in political control and political leadership. There was some discussion over also providing support for opposition leaders who had lost control of their council. Other issues including the rise of UKIP and more councils becoming joint and minority administrations were also discussed.

Dennis explained that the support offer was flexible and that LGA Principal Advisors and member peers would be contacting councils that changed control shortly after the local elections to discuss potential support needs.

Decision

- i. Members noted the report.

Actions

Officers to publish and promote the forthcoming revised guide on councils without a majority administration as part of the LGA's wider change of control support offer

Vicki
Goddard

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 2nd June. The day would be a mix of plenary and small group discussions.

Cllr Peter Fleming said it was important that the new role of the Improvement and Innovation Board taking on all improvement work for the LGA be discussed and that other LGA Board chairs be invited.

Members discussed whether the venue should be outside London but it was agreed this was the easiest place for most people to get to.

Decision

- i. Members noted the report.

Actions

Officers to action in light of members comments

Dennis
Skinner

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.