

Improvement & Innovation Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman)

Improvement

1. Thank you to all those who responded to our consultation paper “**Taking stock: where next with sector-led improvement?**”. We received 160 individual responses, which, when responses from representative regional bodies are taken into account, represent 65% of authorities. Responses were also received from a wide range of stakeholders including the National Audit Office, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, the Committee of Standards in Public Life, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, the Centre for Public Scrutiny and various professional bodies, local authority representative and improvement bodies, and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Members discussed the responses at our Board meeting on 12 May and we are keen to engage the new DCLG Ministerial team.

Productivity

2. Regarding **digitalisation**, we have set up a new Digital Experts programme to help councils develop their use of technology by learning from the digital tools and approaches that have already been successfully implemented elsewhere.
3. I also addressed the LG Digital Summit on 22 April, which the LGA hosted. This provided an opportunity for a number of senior officers from councils and sector representative bodies to discuss a sector response to the March budget announcement that referenced an opportunity for the sector to put forward a ‘..... set of proposals that will enable more customer-focused, digitally-enabled and efficient local services in time to inform future budget allocations’.
4. LGA officers are now working with councils, sector representative bodies and DCLG to put together options for the future Spending Review.

Leadership

5. We have launched our range of political leadership development programmes for 2015-2016 for councillors spanning from the beginning of their political careers to being experienced leaders. I would encourage all members to take a look at what is available and to consider whether colleagues in their authorities could benefit. Details can be found on the LGA [website](#).
6. With national and local elections fresh in our memory we have launched the 2015-16 version of the Councillors' Guide, which is now available on the LGA website. The guide provides an invaluable introduction to the world of local government for new councillors and I have been in the process of sending a welcome letter to new councillors including details of the guide, which can be found on the LGA [website](#).

7. We are running a range of briefing and training events in relation to our leadership and improvement work, which we are promoting through our Improvement and Innovation Board monthly bulletin and through our networks in these respective work areas. The latest events include:

- Leadership Essentials for Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs and Vice Chairs on 3- 4 September in Coventry
- free corporate peer challenge peer briefing events throughout 2015 in various locations, facilitated by an LGA Programme Manager
- Health and wellbeing peer training events on 11-12 June and 16-17 July in Coventry.

Innovation

8. We know that councils are keen to learn from each other so we have launched our innovative councils resource. It includes a searchable database of councils involved in our Innovation Zone at our LGA annual conference last year. Knowing how difficult it can sometimes be to find such examples, we are expanding the database to include wider examples of notable practice. The database can be found on the LGA [website](#). I and LGA colleagues are also preparing for this year's Innovation Zone as part of the LGA's annual conference.

Data and Transparency

9. On 24 March, Councillor Roy Perry attended the Open Data Champions event held by the Cabinet Office. He promoted a view that, whilst there are opportunities for open data to help to transform and innovate services and provide new ways to engage and empower communities, local transparency should be based on local needs and the pace should be driven by local demand,; local authorities need support for changing their culture and technical and data infrastructure to provide a sustainable way for publishing their data.

10. We have made some changes to **LG Inform**, our on-line data comparison service, to make it easier for you to find reports, including:

- phrases prioritised over individual keywords
- author name and organisation in basic search
- searching by metric type ID
- ability to exclude words from search
- sorting options in Advanced Search.

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