

19 January 2016

Improvement and Innovation Board: Priorities and Portfolios

Purpose

For decision.

Summary

In the light of the discussion at the last meeting and following consultation with Lead Members the report proposes a revised set of priorities and the creation of new shadowing and ambassadorial roles for Board members.

Recommendations

The Board is recommended to agree:

- A revised set of priorities as proposed at paragraph 4;
- Subject to discussion with Board chairs, the creation of new shadowing roles as proposed at paragraph 7;
- The creation of a new ambassadorial role as proposed at paragraph 15.

Action

- Officers to pursue with Lead Members in the light of the Board's discussion and invite members to take up the new roles.

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Improvement and Innovation Board: Priorities and Portfolios

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to help members take forward the discussion at the last meeting on 2 November about the Board's priorities and portfolios.

Priorities

2. Until now the Improvement and Innovation Board has organised its sector-led improvement activity under five broad strategic themes and appointed office holders to lead on each, (with the addition of Cllr Roy Perry to lead on Transparency) as follows:
 - 2.1. Improvement: vacant (previously Cllr Jill Shortland)
 - 2.2. Productivity: Cllr Shirley Pannell
 - 2.3. Innovation: vacant (previously Cllr Peter Fleming)
 - 2.4. Leadership: Cllr Judi Billing
 - 2.5. Transparency: vacant. (previously Cllr Roy Perry)
3. During discussion at the Board meeting on 2 November there was a sense that members wished to streamline Board priorities whilst at the same time creating "portfolio" positions as a way of engaging wider Board members in the work.
4. In light of the discussions on 2 November and following consultation with lead members the following revised set of Board priorities are proposed:
 - 4.1. Improvement
 - 4.2. Leadership
 - 4.3. Productivity (including Innovation – where there are already strong synergies)
 - 4.4. Accountability and Transparency.
5. This would create four priorities, which would enable each office holder to lead a priority area.

Portfolios and "shadowing"

6. At the last meeting members discussed various potential portfolio roles. As a result of the LGA governance review, the LGA is already trialling a wider "roll out" of the portfolio approach in the area of the previous Community Wellbeing Board and Resources Board and it may be helpful to await and take into account any lessons arising from the pilots.
7. In the meantime Board members also suggested that it might be helpful to appoint members to "shadow" other LGA Boards. This would build on some of our existing support for improvement, for example the adult social care efficiency programme. It could also help the Board support improvement in areas where we know councils can face performance challenges, for example children's improvement. And it could provide a way of pursuing some of the other possible portfolios members suggested during the

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discussion at the last meeting, such as Devolution, Finance and Housing which fall within the remit of specific Boards.

8. Should members wish to pursue this “shadowing” proposal it would be important to have a discussion with the other LGA Board chairs to ensure that the proposal was properly understood and supported.
9. In terms of the role itself, shadow members could take an interest in the performance challenges, improvement issues and activities within the remit of each Board. They might help to ensure our support offers match the changing needs in the sector, are developed in the light of the Improvement and Innovation Board’s overarching approach and that there is no duplication. Shadow members could receive relevant Board agenda, where appropriate attend Board meetings as observers, and report back to the Improvement and Innovation Board as necessary alongside the current regular report to the Board on the improvement activity of LGA Boards.
10. With regard to the two Boards already trialling a portfolio approach (the Community Wellbeing Board and the Resources Board) members would need to decide whether the shadowing role might operate at Board level or at “work-stream” level.
11. Both Boards have identified four work-streams, each led by one of their four office holders, as follows:
 - 11.1. Community wellbeing:
 - 11.1.1. The future vision for health and care systems;
 - 11.1.2. The funding and support for adult social care;
 - 11.1.3. The role of councils in promoting health and wellbeing; and
 - 11.1.4. Vulnerable people and older people.
 - 11.2. Resources
 - 11.2.1. Local Government Finance
 - 11.2.2. Finance for Growth and Infrastructure
 - 11.2.3. Workforce
 - 11.2.4. Welfare Reform.
12. In the case of each work-stream a policy grouping is formed of LGA members assigned to the CWB or Resources portfolios. Each policy group determines its priorities in its own area and will then deliver specific pieces of work. It is intended that the policy groups be innovative in how they conduct their work, making use of new and emerging means of doing business, so there may only be two meetings a year where the policy group meets in person.
13. Consideration would need to be given to how any “shadow” role could work in such circumstances. In terms of Community wellbeing the issues appear interrelated and one “shadow” member may be sufficient and could usefully provide a link to the Care and Health Improvement programme funded by the Dept of Health. The four Resources work-streams however appear quite different in their focus and consideration could be given to

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a “shadow” for each work-stream. The “shadow” might be included as an observer member of a policy group, receive papers and be included in discussions and the group’s work.

An Ambassadorial role

14. During the discussion at the last meeting members mentioned a number of other potential portfolios, largely associated with promoting the value and effectiveness of sector led improvement, raising awareness of the LGA’s offer within the sector and promoting good practice.
15. Members may feel that these activities could be brought together in a proposed Ambassadorial function, with the Board appointing one or more ambassadors for each region. All Board members could be invited to take on an ambassadorial role for sector led improvement within their region. Ambassadors could be asked to promote sector led improvement and the LGA’s improvement offer within their own regional structures, working alongside national and regional lead member peers and LGA Principal Advisers, as appropriate. This could include writing articles promoting the offer and its effectiveness; making presentations about the offer at regional meetings and member networks; drawing attention to good practice, etc.
16. The role could have particular value for the LGA at this stage and potentially help to address the comparative lack of awareness of sector led improvement amongst non-executive members compared to executive members and the criticism that some national commentators make about the effectiveness of sector led improvement when not all councils appear to engage with it or have a peer challenge.

Next steps

17. Subject to members views it is suggested that:
 - 17.1. officers pursue the proposals in consultation with Lead Members;
 - 17.2. any proposal to introduce shadowing roles be first discussed with LGA Board Chairs;
 - 17.3. members be invited to take on a shadowing and/or ambassadorial role.

Financial Implications

18. All Board members are currently eligible to receive a special responsibility allowance (SRA) in recognition of their role on the Board; this existing allowance would also cover any additional Portfolio, Shadowing or Ambassadorial responsibilities as detailed above. i.e. Members undertaking additional responsibilities would not be eligible for further remuneration in addition to their existing SRA.
19. Travel and subsistence costs would continue to be administered in line with the LGA’s Members’ Allowances Scheme.¹

¹ N.B. The LGA does not pay Travel and Subsistence for attendance at its own meetings with the exception of the Chair. Costs incurred in attending LGA Board meetings should be met by the member’s home authority.