

## Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

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**Title:** Improvement & Innovation Board  
**Date:** Tuesday 19 January 2016  
**Venue:** Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, 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
1	<p><b>Welcome and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed board members to the meeting. He noted apologies from Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton CBE, Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE, Cllr Howard Sykes MBE and Cllr Claudia Webbe.</p> <p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Mayor Dave Hodgson, Cllr Keith Glazier and Cllr Sue Whittaker declared that their authorities had received a One Public Estate Award.</p>	
2	<p><b>Board Priorities and Portfolios</b></p> <p>The Chairman and Dennis Skinner introduced a report proposing a revised set of Board priorities in the light of discussions at the previous meeting.</p> <p>Members reaffirmed the following proposed portfolio areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research and sharing;</li><li>• reputation and communications;</li><li>• devolution;</li><li>• finance;</li><li>• and housing.</li></ul> <p>Members also expressed interest in a proposed European/International portfolio, subject to the Board being given a lead role after the June referendum.</p> <p>Members felt that the proposed regional ambassadorial role could provide a helpful “strategic connection” between the Board and existing regional lead member peers and a resource to promote the offer through regional networks. Members asked for further information about how the regional role might operate. It was also suggested that it would be helpful to receive more regular updates about the improvement offer.</p>	

## **Decisions**

Members **agreed** to proceed with the portfolio areas listed above and to the creation of the new Regional Ambassador roles.

## **Actions**

Board Members to be invited to express an interest in the portfolios and regional ambassador roles with the final list of appointees then being agreed by lead members.

### **3 Highlighting Leadership offer: 2015/16**

Cllr Judi Billing and Pascoe Sawyers introduced the report, which updated members on engagement with the LGA's Highlighting Leadership offer as well as the development of an impact evaluation process to analyse the longer-term outcomes and impact of participation in the leadership programmes.

Cllr Billing emphasised that there had been many more council leaders on programmes in recent months, and that the LGA has also begun delivering a leadership programme for opposition leaders. She highlighted that it has been a record-breaking year in terms of the number of councillors signing up for leadership programmes.

Members discussed the importance of taking a long-term approach to measuring the impact of leadership programmes. They welcomed the high number of those under the age of 49yrs taking part in the programmes, but expressed concern over the relatively low numbers of black and minority ethnic (BME) councillors, female councillors and county councillors taking part, as well as the low take up in the North East of England.

Cllr Billing noted that the proportion of male councillors taking part in the programmes has always outstripped the proportion of female councillors in England. Pascoe Sawyers noted that the problem of low participation in the North East was perennial, despite promoting the offer, and suggested that the new Board ambassadors might have a helpful role to play in addressing this pattern. It was likely that the low number of BME councillors on leadership programmes was roughly proportional to the low number of BME councillors in England.

Dennis Skinner added that it might be helpful for members at the beginning of each political cycle to review the leadership programmes for that year.

## **Decision**

Members **noted** the report.

## **Action**

Officers to progress work on the Highlighting Leadership offer in light of the Board's comments.

#### **4 Productivity Programme**

Cllr Shirley Pannell and Alan Finch introduced the report, which outlined the progress being made in the Productivity Programme. Brian Reynolds, Head of the One Public Estate Programme, was present to update members on progress and the recent extension of the scheme.

Cllr Pannell highlighted the work done on the digital transformation offer; the publication of the interim report on health and social care integration, the findings of which were well received; and progress in updating the shared services map. She then introduced a new video podcast about the Productivity Experts Programme. Members welcomed the podcast and thanked Joanne Straw for her work in putting it together.

Brian Reynolds informed members that the One Public Estate programme, is a Cabinet Office funded programme to help local and national government use their land and property more efficiently. He highlighted four features of the programme of interest to the Board:

1. The creation of a powerful ministerial star chamber that aims to help resolve disputes between councils and central government.
2. Greater flexibility for local authorities to use capital receipts for investing.
3. Priority purchaser status for local authorities when central departments sell assets.
4. A new duty on central departments to engage with local government when disposing of assets.

Members thought that the accompanying report highlighted a host of valuable projects that the One Public Estate programme is engaged in and emphasised the importance of greater clarity around the cost/benefit analysis of the programme and of the LGA sharing lessons learnt about best practice from these projects with the sector more widely.

#### **Decision**

Members **noted** the updates and progress on the Productivity Programme.

#### **Action**

Brian Reynolds will distribute a brochure to board members containing further details and statistics about the One Public Estate programme.

#### **5 Children's services improvement and intervention**

The Chairman introduced the report, which had also been presented to the Children and Young People Board and which summarised and proposed a response to the Prime Minister's announcement of new measures to formalise the process for removing failing children's services from local authority control.

Members thought that providing support to authorities facing children's services inspections should have a high priority within the LGA's sector-led improvement offer and that authorities should be strongly encouraged to take up the LGA's support offer whilst recognising that at the same time

there needed to be some targeting of the support to make sure it reached the councils that need it most.

Members were critical of the methodology that Ofsted use to assess children's services. They thought it unacceptable that in one of best child protection systems in world, two thirds of local authorities are categorised as inadequate or requiring improvement, and noted that, although inspections are a crucial component of a well-functioning system, Ofsted's inspection regime appears to hinder, rather than help, councils who receive an inadequate rating.

### **Decision**

The Board **agreed** to propose to the LGA Executive that:

- Support for children's services should have a high priority within the LGA's sector-led improvement offer, given the number of councils currently in intervention and at risk of being judged inadequate by Ofsted.
- The children's services support offer should prioritise councils that have not yet been inspected under the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework and are at potential risk of an inadequate judgement.
- The LGA's political and professional networks should be used to encourage these councils to have a full Safeguarding Peer Review or Safeguarding Practice/Care Practice Diagnostic.
- An enhanced support offer to councils should be developed to deal with any issues identified following a peer review or diagnostic that put a council at risk of an inadequate judgement at their next inspection.
- For councils judged inadequate, the existing support offer should be retained and enhanced, with a focus on supporting them to produce a credible improvement plan and maintain sufficient progress to avoid full-scale Department for Education (DfE) intervention in line with the new proposals

### **Action**

Officers to report the Board's views to the LGA Executive meeting on Thursday 21 January.

## **6 Performance and Finance - 6 monthly update**

The Chairman introduced the six-month monitoring report, which presents a summary of performance against the LGA's business plan and Memorandum of Understanding with DCLG in respect of our revenue support grant (RSG) funded programmes.

Overall performance is strong. Of the 26 key targets 15 are rag-rated green and the remaining 11 are on course to be delivered and currently rated amber.

Members welcomed the report and indicated that it would also be interesting to have some qualitative feedback on the achievements of different RSG-funded programmes to complement the statistical feedback. Members felt that children's services as an area might benefit from greater

RSG funding in the future.

Dennis Skinner explained that the RSG funding comes from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which had expectations about its use. DCLG was likely to be unhappy about significant amounts being spent on children's services improvement in the absence of funding from DfE.

**Decision**

Members **noted** the report.

**7 LGA Boards' improvement activity**

The Chairman introduced the report, which detailed the improvement activities undertaken by other LGA Boards.

**Decision**

Members **noted** the report.

**8 Minutes of the last meeting**

The note of the previous meeting was **agreed**.

It was noted that Cllrs Dominic Gilham and Barry Wood attended the last meeting but were not included on that attendance list.

**Action**

The Member Services Officer will check and update the attendance list for the previous meeting.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Vice-Chair	Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Judi Billing MBE	North Hertfordshire District Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Shirley Pannell	North Kesteven District Council
Members	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Robert Gould	Dorset County Council
	Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
	Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
	Cllr Dominic Gilham	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Phil Davies	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Darren Cooper	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Bob Price	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Lewis Herbert	Cambridge City Council
	Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Sue Whitaker	Norfolk County Council
	Cllr John Blackie	Richmondshire District Council
	Cllr Mike Haines	Teignbridge District Council
	Cllr Cherry Beath	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
	Cllr Claudia Webbe	Islington Council
	Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
In Attendance	Cllr Laura Conway	North Kesteven District Council