

ANNEX 1: LGA PEER CHALLENGE ON INNOVATION - BACKGROUND

(1) What is it?

The peer challenge is part of the Local Government Association's (LGA) arrangements to support local government self regulation. They have offered all councils the chance to receive one peer challenge at no direct cost before the end of March 2014.

To date around 30 councils have taken up the offer. The general feedback is that they are a positive learning experience which supports improvement efforts – they are not “inspections”. As well as receiving a helpful judgement on progress from credible peers, the challenge provides an opportunity to test future plans, increase self-awareness and support improvement.

(2) What will it focus on?

The council's peer challenge will focus on the council's capacity and capability to innovate. All peer challenges also include a focus on corporate capacity and leadership.

(3) Who is on the peer challenge team?

The current agreed members of the peer challenge team are:

- Caroline Tapster (former CEO, Herts County Council)
- Councillor Martin Tett (Leader, Bucks County Council)
- Councillor Simon Henig (Leader, Durham County Council)
- Paul Naylor (Deputy Chief Executive at Ashford Borough Council)

There will also be one additional member of the team with specific expertise in the field of innovation. This will be confirmed shortly.

(4) When will it take place?

The peer challenge fieldwork will take place 26 February to 1 March 2013.

(5) When will the feedback be reported?

The outcomes from the peer challenge will be included as part of the Chief Executive's innovation progress report to Cabinet on 26 March 2013.

(6) What preparation is required?

Unlike previous corporate inspections there is no requirement to submit lots of documentation to the peer team. A small number of existing key documents will be shared in advance.

Discussions will be held with the peer team in coming weeks to finalise the scope and schedule for their fieldwork. Liz Lawrence's (Head of Policy and Performance, Chief Executive's Office) are co-ordinating the preparation and will share further updates nearer the time. There is further background information on the LGA website (<http://www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenge>).

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