

SECURING IMPROVEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines an initiative being promoted by the Local Government Association relating to improvement in Local Government and seeks Members' views as to whether the District Council should sign up to this initiative.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) is committed to working with all councils to enable them to develop the capacity to improve their performance. To this end, the LGA is promoting an improvement initiative which has "all party" support.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 As part of this initiative, the LGA's aim is that by March 2006.
- There should be a tangible improvement in the overall performance of local government
 - The performance of every council should have improved
 - There is step change in the performance of those councils that are currently not performing well
 - No councils are by then subject to government intervention
- 3.2 To deliver this commitment the LGA is seeking to:-
- Encourage councils across the country to play their part in the improvement process by providing support to or receiving it from other councils
 - Work with all relevant government departments, the central bodies and other organisations to enhance the capacity of local government as a whole and to ensure that each council has access to the support it needs to improve

- 3.3 As part of its commitment to local government improvement, the LGA expects the Government to:
- Demonstrate on the ground its support for the principle of self-improvement and peer support
 - Deliver on its promise to make available to all councils an appropriate mix of freedoms, flexibility and support
 - Ensure that all relevant government departments work with the LGA to secure improvement across all of local government.
- 3.4 To ensure that there is 100% support behind this Initiative, the LGA is asking all Council Leaders to sign up to a commitment to improvement. That commitment is outlined under Appendix A.

4 OFFICER COMMENT

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Plan has the improvement of the quality and cost effectiveness of Council services as one of its key objectives. Hence the principle of signing up to such a commitment should be supported. However, Members may have concerns about the actual detailed wording suggested. For example, the wording as drafted may be interpreted as providing or receiving support regardless of resources and with an element of compulsion rather than voluntarily. Therefore, Committee may wish that the Leader signs up to the commitment, with or without qualifications. From an officer viewpoint, the issues given as examples above would be overcome by the insertion of the word 'voluntarily' both prior to 'support to' and 'receiving it from other councils' in the penultimate line.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nothing specific at this stage.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Government is, through a variety of legislation, aiming to secure further improvement in local government. The LGA initiative is in response to this.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** that the Council should support the LGA Improvement in Local Government Campaign and agree that the Leader should sign the commitment pledge, as outlined in Appendix A or as amended by the Committee. (CE)

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

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APPENDIX A

Individual Council Leader Commitment

I support the LGA's proposed commitment to working with its members to help councils to secure continuous improvement in their services to local people. Improvement is best delivered from within the sector and as Council Leader I fully support the principle that every council should be prepared to play its part in the improvement process either by providing support to or receiving it from other councils. I will recommend that my Council participates fully in the improvement agenda.