

REVIEW OF PUBLIC SECTOR IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT

Overview

This paper provides a closing report on the cross-Whitehall review of investment in local public sector improvement support, setting out spending allocations in SR10, and providing an update on departments' discussions with the sector.

This paper is for information.

Introduction

1. Implementation of the review of investment in local public sector improvement support has been taken forward in line with the agreement at the September 2010 Total Place High Level Officials Group meeting. The review considered public funding of improvement support for:
 - Innovation to identify new best practice or best practice from other sectors, etc.
 - Diffusion of best practice and continuous improvement for organisations that are performing satisfactorily but where applying best practice from elsewhere would enhance performance.
 - Support that challenges and reviews existing service delivery.
 - Intervention to address failure.
2. Excluded from this review was improvement support linked to specific operational needs in an individual sector, e.g. technical policing or healthcare support.

Background

3. At the September 2010 meeting of the Total Place High Level Officials Group, a vision for improvement was agreed which identified sector self improvement as the primary route to improved performance with public sector funding supporting the transition from the previously centrally-driven, improvement approach and potentially time limited support to assist in implementation of new ways of working arising from policy developments.
4. Three specific actions were agreed and have been delivered, as follows:

Action	Result
To complete the mapping of the SR10 proposals for improvement resources.	The mapping demonstrates that the commitment to a 30% reduction made in the Total Place report has been exceeded and the remaining funding has been shifted to sector-led spend.
To work with departments and the sector to think about key outcomes to be delivered through public funding, and for how long any transitional arrangements for central government support would need to be in place.	This has been built into the development of new delivery approaches (see below).

Community Budgets Group (Meeting 5 April 2011)
Background Paper: Review of Public Sector Improvement Support

Action	Result
To work (through and beyond the spending review) with departments and improvement bodies to determine the most appropriate delivery models for allocating resources, with a view to significantly simplifying the allocation and use of centrally funded improvement resource in SR10, including consideration of the most appropriate delivery models for support for non-public sector organisations linked to agenda around Big Society.	<p>The major spending departments (DfE, HO and DH) have developed proposals with the LG Group¹ and other sector-led bodies (including ACPO (Police), ADASS (adult social care), ADCS (children's services) and SOLACE) for sector-led improvement approaches.</p> <p>LG Group will receive £116.75m through Revenue Support Grant top-slice to deliver improvement outcomes agreed in consultation with local authorities².</p>

Going Forward

5. An informal network of officials in the major spending departments and improvement bodies will continue to share information as decisions are made on investment and to identify opportunities to work collaboratively to achieve common goals in line with the vision agreed through the review.

Department for Communities and Local Government
29 March 2011

¹ The LG Group comprises the LGA and five improvement bodies: Local Government Improvement and Development (ex-IDeA); Local Government Employers; Local Government Regulation (ex-LACORS); Local Government Leadership; and Local Partnerships.

² Set out in the RSG Prospectus at: www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/14340861