

# Leadership Centre business plan

1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011



## The LGA Group

The LGA Group is made up of six organisations – the Local Government Association (LGA), Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA), Local Government Employers (LGE), Local Authority Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS), Local Partnerships and the Leadership Centre for Local Government (LCLG). Our shared ambition is to make an outstanding contribution to the success of local government. We work together to support, promote and improve local government.

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

### **Local Government Association (LGA)**

The LGA is the single voice for local government. As a voluntary membership body, funded almost entirely by the subscriptions of our 422 member authorities in England and Wales, we lobby and campaign for changes in policy and legislation on behalf of our member councils and the people and communities they serve.

We work with and on behalf of our membership to deliver our shared vision of an independent and confident local government sector, where local priorities drive public service improvement in every city, town and village and every councillor acts as a champion for their ward and for the people they represent.

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

### **Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA)**

The IDeA supports improvement and innovation in local government, focusing on the issues that are important to councils and using tried and tested ways of working. We work with councils in developing good practice through our networks and on-line communities of practice and web resources, and through the support and challenge provided by councillor and officer peers. We also help develop councillors in key positions through our leadership programmes. Regional Associates work closely with councils in their areas, ensuring that we understand and respond to their priorities and challenges, and supporting the Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs).

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

### **Local Government Employers (LGE)**

LGE works in partnership with local authorities, regional employers and other bodies to lead on and create solutions for pay, pensions and the employment contract. LGE offers advice on all employment issues, and represents local government employer interests to central government, government agencies, trades unions and European institutions.

[www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk)

### **Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS)**

LACoRS promotes quality regulation in the areas of trading standards, environmental protection, licensing and gambling, food safety, hygiene and standards, civil registration, animal health and welfare and private sector housing. LACoRS offer comprehensive advice and guidance to councils and their partners, disseminating good practice and providing up-to-date information on policies and initiatives that affect local people and local services.

[www.lacors.gov.uk](http://www.lacors.gov.uk)

### **Local Partnerships**

Local Partnerships' mission is to enhance the quality of people's lives by giving trusted, professional support to local public bodies to improve their ability to source and deliver high quality, cost-effective public services and infrastructure.

[www.localpartnerships.gov.uk](http://www.localpartnerships.gov.uk)

### **Leadership Centre for Local Government**

The Leadership Centre's work is based on the belief that great leaders make great places. Thriving prosperous communities require visionary leadership that paints a picture of the future of the locality, inspiring and carrying with it the local residents' hopes and happiness.

The Leadership Centre supports local government leaders to create the future through building effective and efficient partnerships, improving the lives of local people and fundamentally transforming communities for the better. Place is contested space for local government leaders, so we focus on the unique realities of the relationships involved helping members and officers develop their skills and thinking on leadership, through national and regional and local initiatives.

[www.localleadership.gov.uk](http://www.localleadership.gov.uk)

## The future of local government

### We are working for:

- a new world of responsibility, choice and local control with **public services redesigned and reshaped around the needs of local places and local people** so they can take responsibility for improving their own lives
- a shift in the balance of power away from central government to local government, with **accountability for public services transferred to the local level**, along with a reduction in the burden of central bureaucracy
- **stronger, more powerful local government**, with councils and elected councillors providing leadership at the centre of new local governance arrangements
- **local public service providers to be freed up from unnecessary controls** so that they can develop tailored responses appropriate to the challenges of their communities
- **local people able to make informed judgements and choices about local services**, with the information and ability to challenge those who provide public services on their behalf
- councils working in fundamentally different ways with their partners to provide **more responsive, more efficient and more innovative public services in a world of tighter public finance**.

## Our priorities

To make sure we are responding to the right issues and the diverse landscape of local government, the LGA Group has looked at what councils themselves are saying are their top priorities. We have challenged ourselves on where we as national bodies can add most value. While we have built on last year's business plan, we now have greater focus and now focusing on five priorities:

**Reputation** – building and maintaining the national and local reputation of councils

**Innovation and value for money** – supporting councils to deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness

**Local democracy** – ensuring councils are at the forefront of greater local decision-making on spending priorities and service delivery and leading improvement work across the sector

**Economy** – supporting councils to lead their communities to prosperity in the economic recovery

**Customer service** – ensuring the LGA Group enhances the reputation of local government and delivers value for money.

**We work together to support, promote and improve local government.**

## The Leadership Centre business plan 2010/11

The Leadership Centre's work is guided by a set of basic principles. Originally set out in our publication *Living leadership* and developed through workshops and interviews with sector leaders, pragmatically this now means following the principles outlined below.

- **Building foundations to ensure success:** the speed is in the implementation of a process and that can only happen if the right people are properly brought in early on.
- The sort of change we need comes out of **doing real work**. That means starting with a real problem and working with it and its implications – not starting with an artificial framework.
- The people who do the work are the people who lead the change. This means that we need **active involvement and time commitment** from all the leaders we work with.
- The particular issue or start point is not always critical. We can start wherever there is **most interest and enthusiasm** and allow that issue to be the means by which we understand how we can lead more widely.
- The nature of working in this way is that we end up following a real **range of leads and creating new connections where needed**.

The Leadership Centre's work is organised into four main strands. These are as follows.

- **Civic Pride.** Our ground-breaking work within party political traditions to develop the capacity of local political leadership and reinvigorate local democracy.
- **Leeds Castle Leadership Development programme.** The sector's flagship programme for the most senior political and managerial leaders.
- **Total Place.** Work within places helping local leaders become more effective in shaping the future economic, social and environmental sustainability of their area to achieve 'Better for Less'.
- **Knowledge Management.** The means by which our learning is shared to influence more widely the work of the sector including publications, learning events, think tanks and conferences.

The LGA Business strategy sets out five cross-cutting priorities for the LGA family of organisations: innovation & value for money, local democracy, economy, reputation, and customer service. All the Leadership Centre work supports these priorities. We will ensure that we address these priorities through our work as better leadership enables more effective delivery.

In particular, the Leadership Centre's work addresses 'Local Democracy', 'Innovation and value for money' and 'Reputation'.

## Local democracy

This element is delivered by our **civic pride** programme under Joe Simpson's leadership. It is provided through our core RSG funding with additional funding from CLG for the '21st Century Councillors' and 'Be a Councillor' programmes.

The Leadership Centre's role is to help the sector think ahead and prepare for changes in the context of local government going forward. Over this year, the focus is to be supportive to councils in a post general election world. The work between the political groups is balanced but it is also tuned to the specific needs of each group at any particular time.

Whatever the outcome of the general election there will be two key themes to the impact of the reductions in public services; how do local politicians lead this process locally and, rising to the challenge of greater responsibilities for councillors that approaches such as Total Place necessitate.

The existing programmes of 'Next Generation' and 'Change of Control' are already beginning their work for the coming year with both building on the successes of previous years. The output in each case is a cadre of high quality cabinet level politicians who have been exposed to the wider implications of political leadership and incoming administrations prepared for power and assisted through the process of handover.

'21st Century Councillor' and 'Be a Councillor' are both elements of the same process. In essence they are to ensure that we recruit a high calibre of councillors who are doing work that is seen as highly relevant and desirable by the general public.

We will continue to support political thinking both within and across groups through our series of learning events and sponsorship of workshops and fringe events at conferences.

This work will be delivered through a group of political leads representing each of the group offices under Joe Simpson's overview. It is supported by political officers, Charlotte Eisenhart and Siobhan Monaghan-Coombs. The deployment of the political coaches developed over the previous years is critical to this work as is the support of senior peers.

## Innovation and value for money

There are four key events that could possibly shape the direction of our work over the coming year:

- the Budget
- The general election
- a potential emergency Budget/Financial Act post election
- a potential spending round 2011-14.

The Leadership Centre must ensure that its offer helps leaders through each of these processes and is still seen to be valuable and relevant at each step.

The core funding that the Leadership Centre receives from RSG top slice should be used to fund two key areas:

1. political development work (especially 'Change of Control' and 'Next Generation')
2. developing wider leadership capacity (including 'Knowledge Management' and 'Leeds Castle').

These particularly fulfil the role of building wider leadership capacity in local government and local public services. The Leadership Centre is the body that has the capacity to help political leaders work within the 'politics of austerity' resulting in savings considerably in excess of the cost of such work. The success of Total Place thus far has been built on the exceptional relationships that the Leadership Centre has established with and among senior politicians (both local and national), chief executives and senior civil servants that have been developed through this work. This unique position across government, national and local, makes the Leadership Centre able to move swiftly and appropriately in response to emerging national agendas, often before these are widely apparent.

The Leadership Centre should seek additional project funding to support specific programmes of work outside of this. 'Connecting Communities' and 'Total Place' are excellent examples of this. Both of these projects originated from work done by the Leadership Centre from its core budget and are now funded in addition to the Leadership Centre's core work. Both have funding that continues into 2010-11 that ensures their continuity. It is envisaged that following a general election, Total Place particularly may need to take on a new iteration as it moves to 'mainstreaming' and perhaps a new name.

## Reputation

This element includes our **Leeds Castle** and other programmes that are led by Holly Wheeler and is provided through our core RSG funding and contributions from participants.

Leeds Castle will run a further cohort during 2010 - 11 (cohort 7). This cohort is already recruited with a number of high-profile leaders and chief executives confirming that they will attend. Sensitivities around economic downturn have led us to reconsider the overseas element of the programme.

The output continues to be a raising of the capacity for leadership at the most senior level, within leader's individual organisations, in the places they represent and across the sector.

We now have around 120 Leeds Castle alumni who will meet as a group during the coming year but will also figure in our wider work with the sector. This group is now of sufficient scale that it can influence more widely, and sub-groups of the alumni are taking it upon themselves to support each other in their work over the coming year.

Discussions are at an early stage within the PSL regarding a 'top programme' for the whole of the public sector, both national and local. We are directly involved in shaping these conversations and will decide over the coming year how best the leadership centre might engage with this and the role it should play.

We are also developing a programme for the 'Aspiring Chief Executives' working in conjunction with SOLACE. This is in response to increasing political pressure regarding the escalation of chief executives' salaries and the difficulty that many, very capable, deputy chief executives, corporate directors and district chief executives have in breaking through to top-tier posts. It will draw on our extensive political connections and our intent is that selection for, and completion of, the programme will indicate an individual is now ready for this post. Success should be measured by the appointment of graduates from the programme within a year.

The Leadership Centre will also continue to run aspiring chief executive programmes for the London, North-West and Yorkshire and the Humber Strategic Health Authorities. These programmes will continue to be delivered in partnership with the Centre for Innovation in Health Management at Leeds University Business School. In each case the programme that we have run this year has been extended for a further year. This is income-generating activity for the leadership centre funded by the SHAs.

## Knowledge management

Much of the work that is knowledge management has been described within the three core areas above as it primarily concerns the promulgation of learning that has occurred during that delivery. It is provided through our core RSG funding and includes our extensive range of publications, our 24 hour learning events and our work at conferences including workshops and fringe sessions.

The Leeds Castle programme is in addition supported by a post graduate research project from Warwick University that will provide a longitudinal study into the effectiveness of the work. Early indications are that this is proving highly valuable and will offer good insight into what really works in developing senior leaders that can be shared more widely.

The work with the three SHAs is subject to a similar process through the University of Leeds.

The Total Place work has, as part of the CLG-allocated funding, £250K allocated for building the knowledge base regarding the work of those projects and for its dissemination. It is envisaged that this will also inform other existing mechanisms from within the sector (eg conferences and publications).

## Customer service

### **Context**

With councils facing increasing challenges arising from the economic situation, it is more important than ever that as national organisations we add value. Through our major change programme, Getting Closer, we will:

- ensure that the LGA Group is more focused on councils and councillors
- further integrate the work of the LGA and the central bodies
- reduce our costs and maximise efficiencies.

### **Our focus over the coming year**

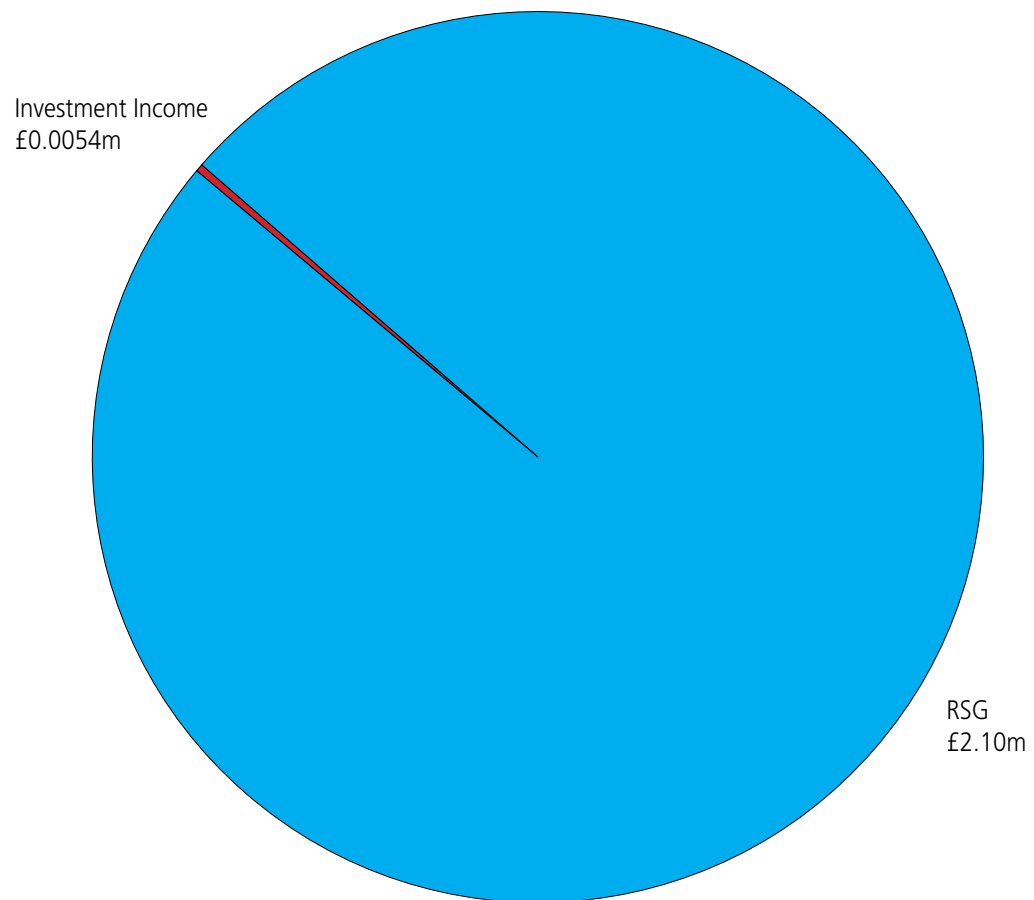
We are changing our political governance to give councils more influence, ensure stronger political direction and better co-ordination of the group.

We are developing new services to ensure that we meet the needs of councillors in a changing political, economic and technological environment.

We are also working more effectively across the group to reduce our costs and improve our offer.

## Leadership Centre budget 2010-11

### Total Income 2010-11



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**Local Government Association**

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 400 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.

