

## **Progressing Next Year's Innovation Zone**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This report invites Members' views on the organisation of the Innovation Zone at the LGA Annual Conference 2017. The report includes background details about the Zone, latest developments and suggestions as to how Members could be more involved.

### **Recommendation**

That the Board advise on the development of the Innovation Zone for 2017 and the involvement of members in the further development of the Zone.

### **Action**

Officers to progress the development of the Zone for 2017 in the light of members' guidance on the issues raised in paragraph 7.

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## **Progressing Next Year's Innovation Zone**

### **Background**

1. The LGA's innovation programme shares examples of local government and wider public sector good practice and aims to equip councils with the tools and confidence to use innovative approaches to solve their challenges.
2. One of the ways in which we share good/innovative practice is through the three-day Innovation Zone that we have organised at the last four LGA Annual Conferences. This will be repeated in Birmingham in 2017.
3. The themes of the 2016 Zone were leadership, integration of services for better outcomes, digitalisation, collaboration with others, and tools to help councils develop a culture of innovation. Cllr David Simmonds, then Chairman of this Board, formally launched the Zone, and other Board Members assisted with the compering of the sessions over the three-day programme.
4. Key successes this year were that the Zone:
  - 4.1. Was livelier and better attended than ever – approximately 80 per cent of sessions were full;
  - 4.2. Featured innovations from over 30 local authorities from across the country and seven national organisations including the BBC and Sunday Assembly that referenced innovations from a further approximate 40 councils. Speakers from the Netherlands, Denmark, Canada and the Commonwealth also participated, and Newton Europe - the Zone's sponsor - showcased innovative work it had undertaken with the LGA and councils;
  - 4.3. Promoted our searchable [innovation database](#), which now contains over 1000 case studies including those from the Zone. The database has had over: 4800 unique page views, 6900 page views, 2600 entrances and 2800 returning visitors since July.

### **Improvement and Innovation Board feedback**

5. At the Improvement and Innovation Board meeting on 12 July 2016, Members commended the Zone and made a number of helpful suggestions:
  - 5.1. Some sessions could have had a clearer focus and more examples to highlight lessons learned;
  - 5.2. More challenge and/or vetting could be built into the process of selecting Zone contributors;
  - 5.3. Members could have more input into developing the Zone.
6. Our aim is to build on all these successes, comments, and feedback from this year's delegates to ensure next year's Zone is even better.

### **Innovation Zone for 2017**

7. As planning for 2017 progresses, it would be helpful to receive Board Members' views on the following issues:

7.1. Zone themes: Whether to theme the Zone? There can be potential benefits in not having themes since this provides the opportunity to encourage the greatest number and breadth of examples to consider. Alternatively if members wish to theme the zone it would be helpful to receive suggestions about potential themes and speakers. The Board suggested at its last meeting that there could be a stronger focus on how innovation can drive the transformation of service delivery. Workforce has also been suggested as a theme.

7.2. Categories of organisations' innovations to in/exclude. Should the Zone include:

7.2.1. only tried and successful examples of innovation and lesson learned, or also more experimental work

7.2.2. examples from local authorities and other public sector organisations such as health and emergency services can also be valuable, particularly where they are working with partners, eg through the One Public Estate programme. It is suggested that examples from other sectors should be sought

7.2.3. whether to include European and international examples again.

7.3. Member involvement: how best to involve Board Members in, and inform them of, Zone developments, eg via a Member lead and/or task group, helping to challenge/vet potential contributors, further compering opportunities at the Zone, and reporting back to the Board.

8. In the meantime we have, as in previous years, established a working group of officer colleagues across the organisation to begin to take things forward. The group has considered feedback from delegates and contributors at the Zone in 2016, initial ideas on layout, sponsorship, content, communications for 2017 and is progressing an internal session for wider LGA staff to contribute their ideas.

### **Implications for Wales**

9. None.

### **Financial implications**

10. None.

### **Next steps**

11. Officers to progress the development of the Zone for 2017 in the light of members' guidance on the issues raised in paragraph 7. above.