

Summary of improvement activity

1. This progress report draws together a summary of significant improvement activity led by other LGA Board's since this was last reported in November.

City Regions Board and People and Places Board

2. The LGA's work on devolution is led by the City Regions and People and Places Boards. Under their direction, the LGA has sought to support councils with their devolution ambitions with activity focusing primarily on: negotiating deals, moving from a deal to implementation, and sharing knowledge and best practice. Recent activity has included:
 - 2.1. A third meeting of the Combined Authority (CA) chief executives network, which took place on 19 December. The LGA continues to provide the secretariat and uses input from the network to refine our improvement offer. The network provides an opportunity for chief officers to share learning and discuss key issues, allowing for discussion on a mix of practical challenges as well as longer term policy issues. Recent agenda items have included: fiscal devolution, preparing for May 2017 (examining capacity with CAs to support mayors), housing and establishing a commonwealth mayoral network. The network will meet twice before the mayoral elections (February and April).
 - 2.2. Continuing to add to a suite of publications and online tools related to devolution that have been launched including:
 - 2.2.1. The publication of an LGA commissioned report by New Economy, *Learning from English Devolution Deals*, which presents the findings of their independent research on perspectives from local and national government leaders who have been involved in the devolution deal process in England to date.
 - 2.2.2. A brochure - 'Devolution: our support offer', which formalises the LGA's devolution support offer, including brokering a tailored package of interventions with the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Local Partnerships and producing material setting out the resource available to councils.
 - 2.2.3. A range of practical online tools developed by New Economics Foundations to help councils with civic and democratic engagement in devolution.
 - 2.3. Our continuing work with Universities UK and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to develop a pilot project in six areas, Leading Places, which looks to strengthen and develop place-based, collaborative leadership between the local government and higher education sectors. On 21 November senior representatives from each of the areas attended a national peer challenge event facilitated by the project consultants the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE). The event was well-attended and well-received and there was clear evidence of tangible progress in each of the pilot areas.

- 2.4. Our continued development and delivery of a bespoke offer of support for a number of areas across the country. Support continues to be tailored to the specific needs of councils, (including those in non-metropolitan areas) and includes leadership support (helping areas establish shadow CA structures or moving from shadow to formally constituted CAs), overview and scrutiny support, policy capacity, supporting CA boards, brokering discussions with Whitehall officials, developing communication strategies and supporting areas to develop a meaningful approach to civic and democratic engagement. In addition to the support provided to the CA chief executive network and the wider officer network, direct (bespoke) support continues to be provided in: Cambridgeshire/Peterborough, Tees Valley CA, West Midlands CA, and Cornwall, with initial scoping discussions having also taken place in the Liverpool City Region and Lancashire.

Community Wellbeing Board

3. Leadership Essentials in Adult Social Care Programme was held at Warwick Business School from 22 to 23 November. Twelve members whose portfolios include adult social care heard from a range of high profile speakers on the key challenges in a changing and challenging policy landscape. Some sessions across the two days were joint with the Health and Wellbeing Leadership Essentials programme given the read across health and social care and providing opportunities for networking, discussion and debate. On 12 December, a well-received Health and Care leadership event was held in York, again with the Health and Wellbeing Leadership programme for lead members for children's and adults and Health and Wellbeing Chairs in the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside. As well as hearing from a range of speakers on a number of current issues, 31 attendees heard about the support on offer and how to contribute to regional and local improvement activity.

Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

4. CHIP is the LGA sector-led improvement programme for adult social care and health. It is funded mainly by the Department of Health (DH) with contributions from the NHS for some digital activity and Transforming Care. For 2016/17 CHIP's aim is to use sector led-improvement to support local care and health economies to:
 - 4.1. Develop effective leadership to integrate and devolve local care and health by 2020
 - 4.2. Manage financial and systemic risks and improve service delivery
 - 4.3. Improve quality and safeguarding.
5. Highlights from October to December 2016 include that:
 - 5.1. We continued to represent and reinforce local government's views in the development of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and Integration policy framework and planning guidance. Frustratingly, publication, originally pushed back to December, has been further delayed to the New Year. This is holding up finalisation of the BCF graduation process we are developing with Government and NHS England and our support to councils' implementation through our BCF support package, which are dependent on publication of the BCF framework and confirmation of funding. In the meantime, we successfully developed and launched the first phase of our online

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library of resources and case studies supporting areas progress integration ambitions.

- 5.2. We launched *Stepping up to the Place* and the place-based integration self-assessment toolkit developed with the NHS Confederation, NHS Clinical Commissioners and the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) in June. Since then, we have completed all 10 self-assessment workshop pilots and an evaluation that placed an emphasis on strong leadership and relationships, governance and a shared commitment to joint vision but less so priorities, as enablers for effective integration. This feedback was used to develop the Facilitated Integration Tool (FIT) Workshop Programme with the first two sessions delivered in Reading and West Berkshire. We are developing follow up support and optional modules including a finance workshop for health and wellbeing boards with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). We also co-delivered a further two Leadership Essentials programmes with NHS Clinical Commissioners.
- 5.3. Care and Health Improvement Advisers continued their engagement with the most challenged councils and system partners, having direct contact with 50 per cent of councils during this quarter. The top areas for support this quarter were leadership, financial sustainability, mentoring and delayed transfers of care/resilience.
- 5.4. We published *Transforming social care through the use of information and technology* with the Institute for Public Care showcasing examples of good practice across key digital themes. Launched at the National Children and Adult Services Conference, the workshop attracted over eighty attendees. It was one of a series of very popular sessions run by the CHIP, or with leading contributions, that included:
 - 5.4.1. Managing and mitigating risk in adult social care (ASC) (300 delegates) at which financial risk and sustainability in ASC were emphasised as key issues for councils.
 - 5.4.2. Systems resilience with ADASS, the Emergency Care Improvement Programme and NHS England for more than 100 delegates.
 - 5.4.3. Joint market shaping session with DH, ADASS and the Institute for Public Commissioning.
 - 5.4.4. Impact of empowerment in Transforming Care led by expert by experience with the initial screening of empowerment films for distribution by Transforming Care Partnerships (launched December).
 - 5.4.5. Case study examples from the LGA efficiency programme were shared at Speakers Corner alongside publication of the final report from our Learning Disability work;
- 5.5. We have scoped and agreed a pilot for Commissioning for Better Outcomes in integrated commissioning (iCBO) with ADASS and NHS England's Services Efficiency Project.

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Children and Young People Board

6. The LGA and Isos held four regional workshops, where delegates got to discuss experience of their own children's improvement journeys, as well the content of the Isos action research, during October and November. The learning from these workshops has been summarised and is available on the LGA website [here](#).
7. Isos has also been commissioned to undertake additional work into one of the themes that emerged in the action research - the impact that different structural models have had on the delivery of children's services in different council areas. We expect this research to be published in the first quarter of 2017 and will be discussed by both the Children and Young People, and Children's Improvement Boards.
8. The second of three children's leadership essentials courses took place in November, where delegates discussed the challenges they are facing in their own authorities, as well as the impact of an Ofsted inspection, the changing council role in education and the role of councillors as corporate parents. The final course of 2016-17 is taking place in January.

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

9. The LGA's joint libraries taskforce with DCLG launched [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries](#) at the start of December. This outlines plans to develop a range of tools, and included some funding to support libraries to transform. The LGA will be leading on the development of two strands of the vision to ensure that they properly reflect a sector-led approach, and not centrally imposed requirements. These are:
 - 9.1. Developing a needs mapping tool
 - 9.2. A bench-marking framework for services to self-assess against.
10. There has been considerable negotiation with central government and the taskforce around the nature of these proposals, and the CTS team is seeking the advice and support of the Improvement team to ensure that they are truly developed by the sector for the sector, in line with our existing improvement offer. It is expected that [LG Inform](#) will comprise a significant part of the needs assessment tool, and the Research team has been invited to present to the taskforce. We continue to work with the taskforce to identify innovative practice in library provision and publicise this through a series of blogs on Gov.Uk.
11. We have also been successful in receiving further grant funding from Sport England and Arts Council England to deliver culture and sport improvement activity for 2016-17. This will include three Leadership Essentials Sport programmes, two Leadership Essentials Culture programmes, four culture peer challenges and the development of an online culture good practice toolkit.
12. To date, two Sport Leadership Essentials courses and both cultural courses have been delivered. Peer challenges for Cheshire West, Reading, Sutton and Carlisle will take place in January and February. Work is underway to design the online culture good practice toolkit and a number of case studies have been collated to populate the toolkit. We are also producing a case-study document on place-making, in partnership with the

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Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association. Both the toolkit and case-study document are intended to be launched at the CTS conference on 23 February.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

Housing

13. On 6 January 2017, the LGA working with St Basils, a charity that works with young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, held a workshop on improving young people's accommodation and support in two-tier authorities. The event was attended by over 80 people representing a range of councils. This is one of a number of workshops that the LGA is hosting on housing improvement issues. We are also now developing the improvement programme for the next financial year, working with colleagues in councils to ensure that the offer is relevant to a range of challenges and housing markets.

Unlocking growth

14. The EEHT Board has met with representatives of the British Property Federation (BPF) to talk through the key findings of the joint work with the LGA on unlocking growth. The next stage will be to spread good practice to a broad range of councils and to continue to undertake some in-depth visits where councils would find this helpful. The findings of the LGA BPF work will be published on 25 January and councillors are welcome to attend the launch event, which is being held between 11:00 and 14:00 at U+I, 7A Howick Place, London SW1P 1DZ 26.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Countering extremism

15. We have developed a new leadership essentials course to explore councils' role in countering extremism, which will run at the end of February. The programme will cover understanding extremism, assessing risks, distinctions with delivering the Prevent duty, effective approaches to tackling extremism, scrutiny of local strategies and how to challenge extremist ideologies. The course will encourage members to discuss some of the key issues for councils around this agenda, and provide opportunities to share good practice with members in similar roles.

Taxi licensing

16. We also held a series of successful events for councils on taxi licensing in November 2016. The events focused on providing support to councils around oversight and scrutiny of licensing, the role of the licensing committee, as well as sharing best practice and tackling specialist issues like preventing child sexual exploitation and supporting disabled access. Another regional taxi licensing event has been planned for February in the North West.
17. An updated version of our councillor handbook on taxi licensing has been published and shared with lead members and licensing champions.

Fire reform agenda

18. A key pillar of the government's fire reform agenda set out by the former Home Secretary Theresa May in May 2016 is the creation of a fire inspectorate to assist in increasing transparency in the fire and rescue sector. Since then officers supporting the Fire Services Management Committee have been discussing with Home Office officials and LGA improvement colleagues how the inspectorate might work and what the relationship will be between it and the Fire Peer Challenge and Operational Assessment. In the autumn Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) was asked by the Home Office to draw up proposals for establishing an inspectorate and the inspection programme. Members from Fire Services Management Committee were part of HMIC's advisory stakeholder group, and have also been part of an internal LGA working group looking at the future of Fire Peer Challenge. The Home Office plan is for the inspection regime to be piloted from April 2017 and fully operational in April 2018, with the first full set of inspections taking place then. Home Office officials have been clear that they see a continuing role for Fire Peer Challenge alongside the new inspection regime.
19. The Home Office published Adrian Thomas' independent review of terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service, which set out recommendations for reform of the way the fire and rescue service operates. These recommendations cover the working environment, the conditions of service, industrial relations, the retained duty firefighter system and the management of the fire and rescue service. The Home Office expects the sector to take the lead in responding to the recommendations in the review and to reform terms and conditions of service, and the Fire Minister is keen to see the service more reflective of the communities it serves. The LGA has a key role to play in responding to the review, in particular through its support to the National Joint Council. The LGA will be publishing a guide for fire and rescue authorities to increasing the diversity of the staff recruited into the service in the future at the annual Fire Conference in March, and is also working on agreeing a memorandum of understanding with relevant groups in the fire service about how collectively we can work to increase diversity within the fire service.

Resources Board

Workforce

20. We co-commissioned with the New Local Government Network [Outside the Box](#), a thought-provoking report on the future of the employment 'deal' in local government, including the results of a survey and case studies, highlighting the need for new approaches to recruitment and staff engagement. The report was launched in December.
21. We have been working with ADASS and representatives from London councils to establish a memorandum of understanding for adults agency workers to reduce spend and usage for councils in London.
22. We have also worked with the Department of Health and councils in London to establish a Health Check for Social Care, which has been rolled out to councils across the country.

Finance

23. The Resources Board has not been involved in any specific improvement work since the last update. Progress on further business rates retention has however continued with

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meetings of the member task and finish group and officer steering group and working groups. Agenda and meeting papers for the steering group and working groups are available on the LGA's business rates retention hub [website](#).