

LGA Boards' Improvement Activity

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This is a progress report on improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards.

Recommendation

That the Improvement and Innovation Board note the report.

Action

Officers to respond as necessary to any comments.

Contact officer:

Vicki Goddard

Position:

Improvement Support Adviser

Phone no:

0207 664 3078

Email:

vicki.goddard@local.gov.uk

LGA Boards' Improvement Activity

Background

1. Members have agreed that it is important for this Board to retain a strategic or “overarching” perspective on the improvement activity currently undertaken across LGA Boards. This helps ensure consistency with the key principles underpinning the approach to sector-led improvement and helps avoid any potential duplication.
2. To achieve this:
 - 2.1. officers coordinate the flow of business through the Boards so that the Improvement and Innovation Board can be invited to express strategic views about any significant improvement issues put before other Boards;
 - 2.2. during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes;
 - 2.3. as far as possible, the Improvement and Innovation Board meets towards the end of each cycle of meetings so it can consider any significant issues put before other Boards and then report back to Boards at their next meeting.
3. A progress report drawing together a summary of significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was last reported is set out in **Appendix A.**

Implications for Wales

4. There are no implications for Wales.

Financial Implications

5. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Next steps

6. Subject to Members' views, officers will continue to brief the Board on the latest improvement activities across all LGA Boards.

Appendix A

1. This progress report summarises significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was reported to the Board in November 2017.

City Regions, and People and Places Boards

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 primarily focusing on: making the case for devolution, helping to convert agreed deals to implemented programmes, supporting nascent combined authorities, sharing knowledge and best practice. Recent activity has included:
 - 2.1 Providing bespoke support to combined authorities (CAs) and CA mayors:
 - 2.1.1 providing tailored capacity support to seven CAs: the West of England, Greater Manchester, the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region and the Tees Valley;
 - 2.1.2 commenced engagement with the North of Tyne authorities following the announcement of the North of Tyne devolution deal in the Autumn budget;
 - 2.1.3 continuing to convene the CA chief executives' network, including arranging the next meeting for March 2018;
 - 2.1.4 following requests from the CA chief executives' network, the LGA convened meetings of thematic groups for senior CA officers covering:
 - 2.1.4.1 finance
 - 2.1.4.2 housing and planning
 - 2.1.4.3 employment and skills
3. officers appointed a provider to deliver research into CA financial freedoms and fiscal devolution on behalf of the CA chief executives' network. The appointed provider delivered a session with the CA finance directors on 18 January;
4. progressing discussions with Greater Manchester CA, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA and the West of England CA on the roll-out of the self-evaluation diagnostic tool;
5. continuing to provide a mayoral support offer including planning of the next Mayoral Forum event due to take place on 20 February and organising for senior Whitehall representation;

6. working with Universities UK and the Higher Education Funding Council for England to:
 - 6.1 support the delivery of the second phase of the Leading Places programme, which continues to progress in fifteen areas.
 - 6.2 contribute to the development of the Local Growth Academy, which is a leadership programme developed in partnership between the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the LGA, Universities UK and the NHS Confederation; LGA officers have presented at recent sessions of the Academy focused on the Industrial Strategy.
 - 6.3 plan the next stage of the Leading Places programme.
7. continuing to develop and deliver our bespoke support offer to areas looking to secure and advance local devolution, including: leadership support, overview and scrutiny support, policy development, communications and other technical support. The LGA has funded the Centre for Public Scrutiny to deliver an event on combined authority scrutiny in January.

Community Wellbeing Board

8. We are working with the Association of Directors of Public Health to explore local support needs around suicide prevention.
9. 19 portfolio holders for adult social care attended a Leadership Essential course in Warwick in November covering key leadership challenges in adult social care. The well-received event was run in parallel with the Leadership Essentials course for health and wellbeing chairs with some shared sessions and opportunities for networking.
10. A guide for local authorities supporting Syrian refugees looking at the local authorities role in long term resettlement was published in November, focusing on key issues that support integration.

Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

11. CHIP is the sector-led improvement programme for adult social care and health delivered jointly with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS). It is funded mainly by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) with contributions from the NHS for some digital activity and Transforming Care. DHSC has agreed to continue that funding until March 2020 based on a set of priorities around risk and resilience, effective care and health systems and our contribution to the Transforming Care Programme.
12. Insight and activity for quarter 3, October to December 2017, includes the following:

- 12.1 Our ['Why not home? Why not now?'](#) report demonstrated that delayed transfers of care (DTOC) are symptoms of wider efficiency problems. The evidence, gathered from our work in the north of England, describes how problems can be influenced by a number of factors including:
 - 12.1.1 improved ownership of the patient's journey and outcomes;
 - 12.1.2 leadership and staff behaviours that cross the boundaries between health and care and put the patient first;
 - 12.1.3 consistency in decision making;
 - 12.1.4 measuring and focusing on the right things.
13. These messages were further supported by feedback from a series of round table events exploring barriers to implementation and potential solutions. These reiterated the call for strong leadership across care and health and identified the need for a shift in perception of the use of hospitals by residents, overcoming risk aversion by practitioners and ensuring the reablement services help people to become more independent.
14. In response, we have reviewed our DTOC support and have developed a new enhanced offer with national partners to support the most challenged systems (this was made possible by an additional £1.2 million in-year funding secured from the DHSC). This complements our DTOC offer which also includes:
 - 14.1 practical national events to help systems prepare for winter (over 160 delegates, mainly DASS assistant directors and DTOC leads)
 - 14.2 regional DTOC data counting workshops led by Emergency Care Improvement Programme (ECIP) to improve consistency of reporting (approximately 80 delegates per event).
15. Alongside this, we have published a set of FAQs on managing transfers of care plus 'top tips' to provide short-term help with commissioning.
16. We continue to represent concerns around DTOC target setting and agreements to spend improved Better Care Funding (iBCF) as we give voice to the significant frustrations and local tensions aired by councils caused by BCF processes generally. We remain active participants in national negotiations on BCF, iBCF and BCF graduation, challenging decisions where necessary that do not recognise or consider the views and commitments of local government.
17. We are highly visible in these discussions, with Sarah Pickup representing the LGA on (some of) the recent assurance panels. We have reiterated the damage to local relationships caused by recent decisions and stress the significant risk that some area might not achieve the November DTOC target.
18. Locally, our tailored BCF work is ongoing through the peer-led Better Care Advisers/Multidisciplinary Consultants Support Programme. We have supported over 30 areas including seven through the assurance and escalation process plus another eight with integration and BCF delivery. Common themes include planning for greater integration beyond the BCF and planning for and implementing activity to improve DTOC performance.

19. Our advocacy work also continues to highlight how the prioritisation on chasing targets to reduce DTOC rather than on people, remains a distraction and creates a further risk that support is diverted from other areas of need. This disconnect between national and local priorities is increasingly evident with commissioning and market fragility remaining the critical operational factors for councils.
20. This local focus on the practical is also reflected in the increased demand for bespoke support across the programme, most notably risk management and mitigation. We are currently supporting 36 councils with our facilitated risk self-assessment. Plus another 14 sites are in receipt of tailored financial risk support (up from four in the previous 12 months). We are shifting available resources to cover this work and are recruiting additional associates to expand our pool of expertise in these areas.
21. From our risk work, the clear message is that all systems are working to financial constraints. Financial risk continues to put pressure on other areas of social care chiefly markets, managing demand, prevention, commissioning and most notably workforce. With growing requests from councils to intervene on workforce issues, we are exploring options and extending discussions with our partners at Skills for Care.
22. We continue to meet ongoing demand to help areas assess their readiness for the integration of care and health services. As part of this support package, we ran a further three facilitated integration tool workshops with the NHS Confederation, including one covering two health and wellbeing areas. We have also piloted a demand-led finance module and are exploring the possibility of a data sharing module.
23. Increased appetite for our programme of member training offers has been maintained. We held another two Leadership Essentials Programmes with NHS Clinical commissioners for political and clinical leaders – 24 members and six Clinical Commissioning Group chairs and GPs attending. Planning for a mini northern version is in progress.
24. Our new programme of prevention offers continues to prove popular with interest from a number of councils that we have not previously worked with. We have worked with 15 Prevention at Scale sites to finalise support plans and held a learning event. Three Prevention Matters member training sessions were also delivered with a further seven expressions of interest. Full details of this new programme are available from the prospectus – [‘Public Health, Prevention and Early intervention Sector-Led Improvement Prospectus’](#).
25. Two cross system health and care peer challenges were delivered plus a peer training day.
26. As part of our NHS Digital funded activities, we continue to work with 15 councils that received up to £50,000 funding as part of the [Digital Local Investment Programme](#). Funding has been extended to include a further four councils.
27. CHIP works with a number of national partners on the Transforming Care Programme, which aims to improve the care and support for people with a learning disability and/or autism. We recently recruited specialist advisers who are all in post and covering the nine regions. Housing is proving a common theme of their work alongside finance and funding flows. We have established nine regional finance

workshops to support sharing of local approaches, eg risk share agreements. We have developed model section 75/256 agreements to support local finance leads.

28. We have also published a series of case studies and Transforming Care approaches to the development of provider frameworks, which focus on people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
29. The national Transforming Care Empowerment Steering Group has co-designed the [‘So what, what next’](#) project to support individuals to be active citizens within their communities and promoting independence. CHIP leads this workstream.

Children and Young People’s Board

30. We have been in discussion with Solace, ADCS and the DfE to develop an effective local, regional and national system to support sector-led improvement in children’s services. Regional Improvement Alliances are being piloted in three regions and we have been exploring with DfE whether there is scope to fund the LGA to deliver a national programme of children’s improvement support.

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

Libraries, Arts and Culture

31. We jointly delivered, with the Libraries Taskforce, two libraries masterclasses to senior library officers, assisting them to apply the Benchmarking Framework and Strategic Planning Toolkit that we developed as part of our contribution to the Libraries Taskforce. The masterclasses were attended by 29 and 25 delegates respectively, and feedback was positive.
32. We co-hosted with Arts Council England a roundtable of professional bodies to encourage the coordinated development of a support offer for council officers with responsibility for culture. The chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association, Sporta, Society of Chief Librarians, and Arts Development UK were all in attendance.
33. We have been commissioned to run three cultural peer challenges by Arts Council England. Bidding closed on 13 December 2017 with eight bids received, and short-listing is currently taking place. The peer challenges will take place in February and March 2018.
34. We have commissioned research into culture-led regeneration, exploring the approach of places that have used culture to regenerate their areas, and capturing the ambitions and rationale of areas that plan to use culture in this way, such as the applicants to be UK City of Culture or EU Capital of Culture. The research will translate the findings into practical advice for other councils to use, and will be published in May 2018. It will be followed by a series of regional workshops aimed at

council and combined authority regeneration teams and local enterprise partnerships.

Sport

35. The LGA's first sport and physical activity conference took place on 5 December 2017 with 76 delegates and two sponsors. It was opened by Tracey Crouch MP, Minister for Sport, and closed by cricket World Cup winner Lydia Greenway. We also launched [Active Places, Healthy People](#) at the conference, which brings together case studies of different models for local sport and physical activity services.

Leadership Essentials

36. We held two Leadership Essentials events – one for sport, and one for culture. Feedback from delegates continues to be good. Work is underway with Sport England to develop a pilot officer Leadership Essentials course, following feedback from councillor delegates about challenges implementing their learning.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

Housing

37. The Housing Advisers Programme (HAP) is designed to support local authorities to deliver projects that helps meet the housing needs of their local area. Local authorities were asked to bid for the programme over the summer and we received 73 bids from across England; 41 projects are being taken forward in 2017/18. The programme covers the broad areas of housing supply, planning and homelessness. We received bids that covered a range of topics, including advice on creating a housing company, unlocking permitted developments that have stalled and preparing for the expansion of the new Homelessness Reduction Act duties. In addition there are innovative projects, such as developing a strategy to minimise the impact of student accommodation on the local housing market and establishing ways to reduce the number of households in nightly paid temporary accommodation. The successful bids went out to tender and the vast majority of projects received interest from a number of suppliers. Almost all projects have been allocated a supplier and programme management systems are in place to ensure that progress is being made as we aim for the projects to be completed by April 2018. Evaluation processes of both the HAP process and the impact of the programme are being developed. We aim to communicate and share the projects by developing a communications plan as well as networking events to promote and share the good practice that has been developed as a result of the HAP.
38. The LGA is delivering a project looking at different ways that 12 councils are working with developers and partners to ensure that sites given planning permission are built out over a reasonable period with the tenure mix, quality and supporting infrastructure needed by communities. It will include recommendations for councils looking to learn from good practice. This will complete in March 2018.

39. The LGA is delivering a project looking at innovative approaches that seven councils are taking to deliver more council homes through their Housing Revenue Account. The project will capture good practice and present options and tips for other councils looking to replicate the ideas locally. This will complete in March 2018.
40. As part of the new Homelessness Reduction Act, the LGA is developing guidelines for councils on procedures for referring homeless applicants on the grounds of a local connection with another council, and a dispute resolution process for when councils do not agree on a local connection. It is envisaged that the Government will include this voluntary agreement alongside the new homelessness code of guidance for councils.
41. The LGA is supporting a project looking at the good practice of council scrutiny committees in scrutinising tenant engagement, housing delivery, private rented sector and homelessness services delivered by councils. The final report will include advice and guidance on how councils can develop the scrutiny of their housing services.

Town centres

42. As part of the LGA's agreement with DCLG on sector-led support we are providing good practice advice and help to local authorities on supporting their town centres. The package of LGA support will include a web-based toolkit, a good practice advice guide for elected members, case studies and research into specific issues affecting town centre performance and vitality. The content being developed was informed from a practitioners event held in November 2017 and is likely to include advice and good practice on strategies for developing the role of town centres and the town centre 'offer' and specific issues such as empty shops, public realm, parking and use of data including digital data. Where possible, links will be made to related areas of work such as dealing with anti-social behaviour, as well as sign-posting to expert resources on external websites. An event is being planned for May 2018 to launch the new good practice guidance.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Counter extremism and Prevent leadership essentials

43. We ran our third counter-extremism leadership essentials course in Warwick in November, attended by 14 councillors from a range of local authorities. We also launched a new leadership essentials course on Prevent, with courses running in November and December in Leeds and Crewe, attended by a total of 31 councillors. A third Prevent course will be held at the end of March.

Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism

44. We hosted the Ministerial launch of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) on 23 November. The SIGCE is a local authority led network, co-chaired by Luton and Leeds councils, partnered by the LGA, the Centre for Trust,

Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, and funded by the Home Office and MHCLG for two years. The SIGCE will bring together councils in England and Wales to share learning and experience, and promote good practice on countering extremism beyond terrorism.

Modern slavery

45. The LGA and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner have published [guidance](#) for councils on modern slavery, setting out what modern slavery is, the legislative framework and the duties for local authorities. Alongside this we are running a number of free regional events to support the guide and provide councils with the opportunity to hear from a range of experts and case studies; the first event was held in London on 17 January with others planned for Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol and Nottingham over the next two months.

Violent crime

46. In November we ran an event for around 30 councils on violent crime. The event explored recent trends and heard about how councils and partners are responding to specific issues including serious and organised crime groups, criminal exploitation and county lines, and knife crime.

Fire & Rescue Authorities

47. The LGA has been providing support to six Fire and Rescue Authorities affected by Police and Crime Commissioner takeovers where there is no local agreement. Officers have provided informal feedback on the National Fire Framework and will be responding to the public consultation on the framework.
48. Following discussions with Avon Fire and Rescue Authority about the development of a bespoke member development package, the first member development session took place in November led by Cllr Rebecca Knox, Deputy Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee.

Taxi licensing

49. Work has commenced to build a national register of taxi/PHV licence refusals and revocations, which the LGA has commissioned. This is due to be ready for testing by a project user group at the end of January, with the release date scheduled for April 2018.

Resources Board

Finance

50. This quarter saw both the Chancellor's Autumn Budget (22 November) and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2018/19 (19 December). We produced on the day briefings for both summarising and analysing the

announcements for the sector. Our formal response to the settlement is being cleared with members. We ran our annual Local Government Finance Conference in January, which was fully subscribed and attended by over 100 people, the majority of whom were senior finance staff or elected members from councils. The programme included commentary on the latest developments and future for local government funding from senior politicians (including the Secretary of State and the Shadow Secretary of state), senior government officials and senior figures from the sector, including from the LGA.

51. Officers attended both regular and some wider “annual” meetings of the county council, district council, municipal and unitary authorities treasurers societies to provide them with updates on various developments to aid with financial planning and share knowledge.

52. We also picked up issues such as the government consultation on proposed revisions to the guidance covering local authority investments and capital financing and changes to the rules for setting planning fees, as well as progress and potential implications of further business rates retention and the Fair Funding review.

Workforce

Strategic workforce priorities

53. A consultative report setting out some proposed LGA priorities across the themes of leadership, organisational development, recruitment, skills and rewards has been prepared and will shortly be made available online with a series of questions for councils. This will help shape the workforce work programme for the coming period. A consultative event for key partner organisations is also being arranged. The launch includes a podcast with endorsements from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Public Services People Managers Association (PPMA). A final set of work priorities will be announced later in the year, following the consultation.

Return to Social Work Programme

54. The first phase of the LGA’s Return to Social Work Programme launches in January and forms part of Government’s aim to help facilitate the journey back to work for those who have taken a career break for whatever reason. Being predominantly female, the local government workforce can benefit from such programmes to fill hard-to-recruit professional roles, such as social work.

55. Successful candidates will complete 12 weeks of training comprising of taught sessions by Kings College University, mentoring, action learning, work placements and self-learning. This will enable experienced social workers to refresh their skills and knowledge, regain their professional registration and help improve outcomes for children and families.

Health and Care – Public Health

56. The proposed employer standards for public health, mentioned in the previous update have now been finalised and will be launched soon. As a reminder, the intention is to help employers ensure that they can achieve a stable supply of properly qualified and experienced public health staff by ensuring that they focus on the things that matter to specialists in their career development.